

DIVORCE COUNSELING WITH SAMOAN COUPLES

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ABSTRACT

My intention in this paper is to increase my understanding about the feelings, the attitudes and the behavior of divorcing and divorced husbands and wives, particularly the Samoans in Los Angeles, California, and find ways that pastoral counseling can help them to help themselves.

During my seven years in the ministry, I have observed the pain and suffering of several divorcing and divorced Samoan husbands and wives. Because some could not share their problems, even with a minister, it was often difficult to understand their experience and pain. Many preferred to keep their problems within themselves. In some cases, their need for legal advice was satisfied by lawyers, but their psychological needs were not met. They still needed someone to understand them and help them.

I want to find ways that I can really help the husbands and wives who are in the process of divorce to rebuild their marriage or to divorce constructively. I also want to discover ways to help recently divorced people with their new life adjustments, so that they may develop their lives to the fullest. Moreover, I want to be an effective minister for people who are in crisis. I strongly believe that crisis in a marriage is a good time for people to take stock of themselves and be honest about the part each had in causing the marriage to break up. Many marriages can be saved if the couples go for help in time, but not all marriages can be salvaged.

There are three methods which I have used in this paper. 1. Literature: Study about the background of marriage and divorce in the library. 2. Interview: Interviews with husbands and wives; counseling with couples who are in the process of divorce; helping them to make a decision either to rebuild the marriage or to decide to divorce; counseling with people (ex-husbands and ex-wives) who have already been divorced; helping them to adjust to a new life. 3. Questionnaire: The purpose of the questionnaire is to learn how Samoans experience and think about divorce and marriage. The first part of the questionnaire is designed for both those who are in the process of divorce and those who are legally divorced. The second part is particularly designed for couples who are in the process of divorce. And as the results that the divorce rate of Samoan couples in Los Angeles area is the highest in the unskilled, low income, fairly educated low social ranking class. The first part of the questionnaire indicated divorced men and women, as well as couples in the process of divorce, strongly stress the need for spiritual help in crisis. The second part also presume that both husband and wife did not realize the urgently needed of mutual sharing between husband and wife. The couple needs a trust relationship mutual understanding; open communication; love, care, acceptance and forgiveness.

CHAPTER I

AN EXPLICATION OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

MARRIAGE

Marriage today among some Samoan in Los Angeles is encountering more threats and disrupting influences than it faced twenty years ago. It is my personal conviction that some Samoan couples today have never understood or have never been strong in the meaningful commitment between husband and wife.

Marriage should be looked from different perspectives--basically sociological, psychological and theological approaches--to understand marriage and its relationship with divorce. The sociological approach is understanding the underlying postulate that human behavior--marital, sexual, parental, and all others--can be understood through the structure of the social relationships of the individual. The psychological framework explains the behavior of individuals through an analysis of their associations with other people, especially the couples in their mutual relationship and their relationship with the world outside. The theological approach attempts to examine the religious perspective of marriage in relationship to divorce.

It is also essential that theological and biblical views on marriage and divorce and their effects on the individual, community and Church be examined. Divorce is a moral problem facing the individual, the family, the Church, and society today:

Sociologists examine the divorce rate as a gauge of family instability; psychologists are interested in divorce as a sign of individual emotional adjustment and philosophers see that divorce may arise from a lack of true understanding about ethical values.¹

I believe that marriage is a mutual relationship--physically, sociologically, mentally, and spiritually between husband and wife. Each one should understand the other in terms of feelings, needs, ups, downs, even the goal of their life together. Both must sometimes sacrifice themselves in favor of their mates needs in adjusting to life situation such as sorrow, joy, failure and success. Marriage is a trust relationship between husband and wife in which each one is to be loved and to be concerned and caring. Marriage is an opportunity for sharing dreams and hopes, and building up the relationship to live a more satisfying and meaningful life. Furthermore, it is a haven of encouragement, reconciliation, acceptance, forgiveness and growth.

I further believe that marriage has potential for the sharing of happiness among husband, wife, and children in a complex and changing social environment; that happiness must be achieved by effort. Marriage involves achieving a healthy and satisfying sexual relationship. Indeed, marriage is the fulfilment of the deepest inner needs: to be an intimate part of another's life; to be faithful and trusted by someone who, over a period of many years, knows and understands his or her partner; to be loved and to be regarded tenderly by someone who

¹ Donald W. Shaner, A Christian View of Divorce (Leiden: Brill, 1969), p. 1.

is concerned and caring. These two partners share life's experiences-- success and failure, joy and sorrow, happiness and pain--together. They share themselves mentally, physically and spiritually. Therefore, marriage is the most profoundly significant part of their lives.

Marriage is the covenant between a man and a woman in which both mutually promise cohabitation and continual devotion to the task of providing comfort and happiness for each other. This union is of spirits and hearts as well as of persons. Technically, marriage is a mutual relationship between a man and a woman who are in the process of achieving a common purpose, a successful lifetime partnership. Husband and wife are two parts of the same team with equal rights in decision making (not the traditional view), with interlocking functions and interdependent power to contribute to the success of the marriage. Marriage is essentially a new way of life for both men and women.

Sociologically, marriage is a sexual fellowship, the structure of which varies considerably according to the general social conditions. The concrete structure of marriage can never be sought merely in terms of sexual desire, and not in terms of fellowship alone between a man and a woman. Once the marriage is made, the husband and wife contribute to the needs of the family and society:

... that is the demands of education, economics, property, social security, public morals and the like because in long run general social conditions are decisively affected by married life and family life. So we can readily understand

why marriage has never been regarded as the private business of the two partners.²

Marriage is one of the most ancient institutions devised by human beings. It is a many sided relationship between a man and a woman intended in some pagan cultures and in all most all religious cultures to continue until interrupted by death. Anthropologists agree that no human group has existed without its particular sex restrictions:

Complete freedom to be promiscuous does not exist anywhere because it does not work satisfactory anywhere. Each culture has worked out what for it, appears to be the most satisfactory set of rules.³

Marriage is an agreement between two people which becomes a relationship where both will learn to give and receive. Most couples ultimately reaffirm their trust in each other and in the good and valuable elements in their lives.

I believe in my own marriage. I see my marriage as a reflection of my highest value. I think that value is love. When you say to someone, "I love you and want to marry you," then you have made a commitment to a social value system. When two people commit themselves to such a relationship, they are saying a great deal about themselves: first, what their values are; second, what they want out of life and what they think they deserve; third, what the relationship does for

² Karl Rahner, Sacramentum Mundi, An Encyclopaedia of Theology (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), III, 390.

³ Alexander F. Magoun, Love and Marriage (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 37.

them. Considering all this, my faith tells me that marriage is the commitment of husband and wife to mutual well-being and understanding through sharing life. I strongly believe that marriage can bring two people more satisfaction in their relationship by making life more pleasant, more joyful, more loving; this is accomplished by mutual acceptance between them. Marriage is an opportunity for sharing dreams, for intimacy, for joining in sharing the purpose of life; and most of all, it provides the proper environment for two people to support each other in mutual growth.

Marriage is an institution of a spiritual as well as of a natural kind, for:

... it is the union not only of two natural persons, but of two responsible and spiritual beings, and its purpose and effect is the production of other beings who will similarly with themselves, have a spiritual existence and be inheritors of eternal life....⁴

Marriage is a mutual contract between man and woman, whereby they become part of the plan which was instituted by God. Marriage also has a special natural obligation, children. God blesses two human beings of opposite sex by commanding that they should marry and by giving them the same rights for the benefit of their children, extended family, and the community. Marriage is a union between two "I's," a man and a woman, who become one flesh and one body. Because this union was originated and blessed by God, the children borne by them it is believed,

⁴ John Henry Blunt, Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 443

will prosper.

Marriage is an exclusive relationship. The total unity of persons--physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually comprehended by the concept "one flesh."⁵

The institution itself is a spiritual as well as a natural kind. It is the union of two natural "selves," two responsible and spiritual beings, who are responsible to God's creation in the bringing up of their children. "Not only married couples live and see the beauty of God's creation but also their children appreciate the goodness of God."⁶

DIVORCE

Divorce is a legal dissolution of the bond of marriage. The formal union of sexes in many countries is connected closely with the religious observances of the people; and amongst Christian nations this religious connection is of so intimate a character that it gives a peculiar solemnity and binding force to the marriage contract. In spite of the character of marriage, there is an emerging philosophy which holds that where there is unhappiness there is a ground for divorce. Indeed, some authorities even claim that if both husband and wife have found sufficient reason for separating, that the fact of separation is adequate evidence of a breakdown of the marriage to justify divorce.

⁵ Everett F. Harrison, Baker's Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 345

⁶ Blunt, p. 443

Divorce is a separation by death--not the physical death of a spouse, but the death of their relationship--thus, as with physical death, there is a time of mourning or grief. Distress and breakdown are common in divorced couples; both men and women suffer the feeling of loss. Divorce involves a loss, an adjustment and a reorientation of one's entire life. It is important to recognize, accept, and live through the emotions which are part of the mourning process.⁷

But the distress which accompanies divorce should eventually be left behind and new feelings of a positive reorganization of one's life begin.⁸ Unfortunately, this often is not the case for there is no outlet for the pain in the individual. For example, take the case of a personal friend of mine who was married for twelve years. He recalled his past experience for me:

Surely I have lost all my precious time thinking and rethinking over our living together. I wandered aimlessly along an unknown path that night. I was sobbing uncontrollably--walking from one end of town to the other. At midnight I was exhausted. There was no one around I could talk to about my feelings; there was only darkness. I was completely confused. I was in uncontrollable emotional and spiritual turmoil. I strongly believe that divorce is the most painful experience I have gone through...divorce is the most shattering of all emotional crisis....⁹

The reason that a divorced person suffers through pain is probable have

⁷Robert Kysar, et al., The Asundered (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), p. 101.

⁸Kysar, pp. 118-140.

⁹Personal interview with Rev. Ieremia Tuiolomotu, 14 September 1979.

no way of preparing for the emotional strain that divorce will place upon them. For example, my friend did not suspect that divorce was imminent in his marriage. To him it seemed to happen spontaneously.

Just as divorce has become a common occurrence in the United States, it has, unfortunately, become a serious problem in the Samoan Community. Parents still play a major role in some marriages, both in Samoa and in California. Sometimes parents will deliberately dismiss their children if they do not follow the parent's wishes in an arranged marriage. Parents can even cause their children to divorce a husband or wife if the spouse has not found favor with the parents.

As a case in point, my brother was married to a woman for fifteen years. He served his in-laws for fourteen years without having an opportunity to work for the benefit of his own children. One day he came to the conclusion that he had to do something for the betterment of his children's future. He decided to leave his in-laws and went back to his own home town. There he started to work for the future of his children. His wife decided to stay with her parents and keep one child, the youngest, with her. He took seven of the children with him and began to bring them up in the way he felt was best. His wife was afraid to leave her parents because she could be condemned forever by her parents. During her stay with them, her parents encouraged her to divorce her husband because he had refused to stay and serve them. She loved her husband but feared her parent's dismissal. Eventually the divorce took place, leaving both husband and wife deeply hurt because their divorce was not mutually agreed to but arranged by the wife's parents

in spite of the couple's desire to remain wed.¹⁰

Another couple I have known for five years had been married for seven years before they divorced. The wife's parents strongly supported the Samoan culture widely practiced in California. The husband had been living on the mainland for many years. He was not really interested in the typical Samoan way of life, such as often contributing money for some special occasions involving the immediate and extended family. His in-laws occasionally commanded money or food and encouraged involvement in special events taking place in the homes of the in-laws or other relatives. However, when her parents discovered that her husband was not interested in giving money, gifts, or food as her brothers and sisters did in some events, they deliberately encouraged their daughter to divorce him. Shortly thereafter she did divorce him.¹¹ These case histories demonstrate how some Samoan marriages end in divorce because of parental influence.

Psychologically, I believe that Samoan children who are strictly brought up by parents find it hard to make their own decisions, because the children are trained to depend on their parents' decisions. Young adults have difficulty establishing their independence from parental authority which has driven home the lesson that obedience is the key to success in life. This explains why parents can scare their children with condemnation threats if they do not obey. As a consequence, the young

¹⁰ Personal interview with my brother Kiso, September 11, 1979.

¹¹ Personal interview with Seti and Asi, August 26, 1977

adult may marry but the authority in his house is his parents'; often his wife is not so much his wife as she is her parents' daughter. So couples are divorced without grounds like adultery, cruelty, or desertion.

Today many Samoan couples are in the process of divorce and others have gained divorces based on some grounds such as adultery, cruelty, and desertion; and some on Samoan grounds, such as parents' decision, environmental influences, orators' decision for their "manaia," and political ploys within their social group. All of these reasons but the last two are more common in the United States than in Samoa. Lowell D. Holmes, cultural anthropologist and author of The Samoan Village, writes, "Divorce in Samoa is rare, but that does not mean that there are not significant number of cases of marital discord."¹² I agree with Holmes when he talks about the unhappy marriages in Samoa in comparison with the unhappy marriages in the United States. Unhappy marriage in Samoa is not a big problem. Most people in Samoa live in the midst of an extended family in an open house in an open community. Samoans live in a community in which there is care and concern for them; where problems are treated in the open. A Samoan does not retreat into solitude to struggle with his problems; there is no solitude, no private room into which he might retreat. In the United States a person may have to struggle with his problem in his own room, desperately fighting against the problem by himself. Many mainland Samoan couples have been

¹² Lowell D. Holmes, The Samoan Village (London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), p. 88

influenced by the American way to cope with their problems; and, unfortunately, their isolation--in rooms, struggling with their problems, each by himself--creates more problems and often results in divorce. Some couples, after many years of marriage, are divorced because of the social environment and the cultural change.

Some Samoan couples consider divorce as commonplace as getting up in the morning and going to bed at night. "Divorce is not a problem here in the United States because you may divorce your wife and escape from California, live in Michigan, and marry with another woman; you can't do that in Samoa; everyone knows you and points at you," said a twenty-seven year old divorced man. "I don't care about divorce here because as long as you have twenty-five dollars so surely tomorrow you have a legal divorce--Las Vegas can help you, or any other legal agency," whispered another divorced man. I believe these people are really hurt--mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.¹³

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MARRIAGE TO THE CHURCH

I believe that marriage is commanded by God and has divine promises which are asserted by Christian authorities; and we are bound to be guided in making and executing marriage law by the utterances of divine revelation. Marriage is a vow which a couple has pledged one to the other in the presence of God and His Church. In addition to this, marriage is based upon the cooperation of the Church and State. There-

fore, the Church has to cooperate with the State for the benefit of human beings.

The minister represents the Church in administering the ceremony of marriage which was commanded by God. The minister declares, "in the presence of God and of this congregation, I here pronounce you publicly joined...." The Church must have a part to play in nurturing the accomplished marriage and the ideal of marriage.

Perhaps, the Church needs to articulate more clearly and frequently a view of marriage based on Genesis, Chapter 2. The most important idea is related in Genesis 2:24. Originally, the expression, "the two became one flesh," may have meant a physical union. Biblical analyst Rad indicates:

It might have referred to the act of sexual intercourse in which the flesh of couples becomes, in a sense, one. Such a meaning would suggest the high regard the Hebrew people had for human sexuality.¹⁴

But, the oneness of the husband and wife consists not only of physical reality, but also of their mutual relationship. In this case, the oneness is found in the interplay of the two personalities. The most significant aspect of marriage for the Church is the spiritual oneness in marriage which is both a divine gift and a human achievement. Spiritual oneness is the experience of shared life, shared spiritual values, shared goals, shared sorrow and happiness. Also necessary are mutual

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Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York: Harper & Row 1962), I, 150.

respect and open honesty to one another. All of these attributes contribute to the growth of the marriage. Myrna and Robert Kysar say in their book, The Assundered:

The unity of marriage is always the mutual interpenetration of two independent individual personalities. To state it in the negative, the unity of marriage is never the absorption of one personality into the other. The oneness in the spiritual marriage does not destroy the individuality of either or both partners. An understanding of marriage informed by the disciplines concerned for mental health will necessarily insist that both persons in a marital unity must maintain their individuality and the unity of the persons.¹⁵

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DIVORCE TO THE CHURCH

I strongly believe that divorced men and women in the Church need some guidance from pastors and enlightened laypersons who have skills based on love and concern. Counselors need the knowledge that divorced persons have the same basic needs shared by all humans plus some special problems. Counselors need to know that they can relate as friends to both parties of a broken marriage. Further, the caring community within the Church's ministry should be more caring, concerned, loving, forgiving and accepting with people who are in pain and suffering emotionally, as divorcing or divorced people often are. An example of the type of pain felt by some divorcing or divorced people is given by David W. Bell, Pastor of a United Methodist Church in Laconia:

No one had to tell me divorce was wrong. I had heaped enough sin and guilt on myself to immobilize me for life... I saw

¹⁵ Kysar, pp. 97-98

myself as an unloved, unloving, and unloveable person. What I needed was acceptance.¹⁶

Many persons who have been divorced and those who are in the process of divorce are burdened with a sense of guilt. For them, divorce is a tremendous experience of failure. One of the most important tasks of life has been boggled--divorce is a painful process. It has even been suggested that the loss of a mate through death may be easier to handle than divorce:

Divorce, moreover, is closely similar to the process of bereavement. All of the experience of loss and fear that accompany the death of a loved one are often present in the life of the divorced. And the guilt that comes with the death of a loved one is also similar to the guilt that accompanies divorce. All of the regrets and second thoughts that come with any separation come with divorce.¹⁷

The difference between the bereavement accompanying death and that of divorce is that in the first case the survivor is alone but has friends and family members to comfort him. In the second case, one has lost not only his mate but very likely many of his friends. His family may question his decision and actions in a judgemental tone, further increasing his feelings of guilt and failure.

¹⁶ David W. Bell, "Clergy Divorce Painful," Circuit Rider, (January 1979) 10.

¹⁷ Kysar, p. 101

DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS

It is also essential to establish a working definition of important terminology in paper. Therefore I have adopted the following definition for that purpose:

DIVORCE

Divorce is a legal decree that a marriage is dissolved. Technically, divorce is used for mutual separation of married couples in terms of ending the contract between male and female from bed and board. Divorce is a result of the final decision between married people: it is the dissolution of marriage.¹⁸

Obviously, divorce is the legal dissolution of the marriage bond involving permanent separation of husband and wife. Each is then free to marry another person while the first partner is still living. Divorce is found among the ancient people: especially among the Hebrews a husband was permitted to put away his wife if something indecent was found in her. The School of Shammai allowed divorce only for unchastity, while the School of Hillel permitted divorce even for a spoiled dinner. The wife was not allowed to divorce her husband.¹⁹

THE BILL OF DIVORCEMENT

The Bill of Divorce is a written document to be shown as the

¹⁸"Divorce," in The New Catholic Encyclopaedia (1967) p. 928

¹⁹"Divorce." p. 928

approval or proof of the divorce and freedom to marry another. This bill must be placed in the hand of the divorced wife.²⁰ The bill of divorcement is found in Deut. 24:1-4. In Hebrew there are two words used to describe this document. These words, "sepher kefithuth," literally a document or a book of cutting off. This certificate was given to the wife by the husband, so as to afford her the opportunity or privilege of marrying another man. Reference to this document are also found in Matthew 5:31-32 and Mark 10:4. The following was the form of the decree:

On the ____ day of the week ____ in the month of ____ in the year of ____ from the beginning of the world, according to the common computation in the province of ____, I ____ the son of ____ (by whatever name I may be known), of the town of ____ with entire consent of mind, and without any constraint, have divorced, dismissed and expelled thee ____ daughter of ____ (by whatever name thou are called), of the town of ____ so to be free at thy own disposal, to marry whatsoever thou pleasest, without hinderance from anyone (who marry thee). Let this be thy bill of divorce from me, a writing of separation and explusion, according to the law of Moses and Israel.

_____, the son of _____ witness
 _____, the son of _____ witness ²¹

ADULTERY.

A husband or wife was guilty of adultery only when he or she

²⁰"Bill of Divorcement," in The New Catholic Encyclopaedia (1967) p. 930

²¹ James Orr, "Bill of Divorcement," in The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Chicago: Severange, 1968), p. 1915

had an extramarital relationship with a married man or woman.

An adulterer was therefore, any man who had illicit intercourse with a married or betrothed woman, or a married woman who had intercourse with any other man than her husband.²²

Adultery was a great social wrong against society and the environment in which adulterers lived. However, the Christian doctrine is also against adultery because this would destroy the covenant relationship between the married couple. Jesus emphasized the inner aspect of adultery which affects the outer desires of man. Jesus referred to adultery as a sin of the flesh, and stressed the inner thoughts and desires of man (Matt. 5:31-32). From the moral point of view, adultery destroys the good of the family in the relationship between husband and wife, children and parents.²³

FORNICATION .

Fornication is defined as human sexual intercourse other than between a man and his wife. Single persons who have intercourse with partners, married or single, are committing fornication. On the other hand, if a married man had extra intercourse with an unmarried woman, he was simply fornicating. It is sexual intercourse with an unmarried woman, he was simply fornicating. It is sexual intercourse outside marriage.

²² John Kitto, A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1866), p. 73.

²³ Kitto, pp. 10-75.

The Greek attitude to extra-marital intercourse is to be understood in relation to varying historical and social circumstance. Prostitutes and brothels are unknown in the Homeric age, Master may keep a concubine or have casual intercourse with female slaves....²⁴

In the New Testament it is characterized by an unconditional repudiation of all extra-marital and unnatural intercourse. Matthew 5:32 and Mark 19:9 both use "porneia," which refers to extra-marital intercourse on the part of the wife which, in practice, is adultery.²⁵

²⁴

Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids:Eerdmans, 1968), p. 582.

²⁵ Friedrich, pp. 582-585.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE IN THE BIBLE

DIVORCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4.

There is no law in the Old Testament that institutes divorce. However, it is known that divorce was practiced by the Hebrew people before Moses. Moses intended to lay down legal forms and detailed instructions for dealing with people who are in the process of divorce and those who are divorced. It would seem that Moses' ultimate goal was to reduce the number of divorces among the Hebrew people. He set forth the following conditions:

1. only permitted one ground for divorce.
2. forbidding the remarriage of the divorced wife after she had been married to another man in the interim.
3. required the presentation of the bill of divorce. Thus the aim of Deut. 24:1-4 was to regulate the legal aspects of divorce and try and prevent hasty divorces.²

Actually, Deut. 24:1-4 is a law about remarriage after divorce. This provides that a divorced woman after a second marriage was not allowed to remarry her first husband.

¹ All references in this chapter will be the RSV unless otherwise noted.

² Abel Isaksson, Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple (Lund:Glerrup Lund, 1965), p. 23

... On the other hand a capricious to-ing and fro-ing is resisted. If the divorced woman has meanwhile entered into a new marriage, return to her first husband is afterward impossible.³

Divorce was a peculiar privilege of the Hebrew male. A man could divorce his wife if he found something offensive in her. But a wife could not initiate divorce; therefore the initiative was completely in the hands of the husband. However, there must be some sufficient fact (s) to support the ground for divorce. There were two schools of thought in the post Old Testament time spoke on the matter:

Shammai held that only some serious indecency, e.g. unfaithfulness, was a ground for divorce, while Hillel believed that one could divorce his wife for anything deemed sufficient, e.g. burning the husband's food.⁴

HOSEA 3:1-5.

This passage indicates that Yahweh commanded Hosea to use his own wife as a vehicle of the divine word of His people, Israel. Hosea was forced to love his unfaithful wife. However, we are given references to Hosea's personal experience in marriage; his relationship with his wife was interpreted as a parable of Yahweh's relationship with Israel. This same portion revealed judgement, reconciliation and restoration of Israel. Biblical scholar James L. Mays writes:

³ Hans Walter Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 175.

⁴ Donald Shaner, A Christian View of Divorce (Leiden: Brill, 1969), p. 6.

The idea is that Yahweh's love will find a way with Israel even though this people has turned away from Him to other gods. Just so, Hosea is to seek out a woman who has deserted him. The story of that desertion and how and under precisely what conditions Gomer lived when Hosea received the divine command is unknown--the embarrassment for this reconstruction.⁵

The prophet's act of love toward his unfaithful wife reflects Yahweh's own love for Israel. Hosea gave high consideration on his obedience to God's command, expressing the concrete realization of his love for his unfaithful wife with the words, "bought her for myself." (Hos.3:2) This signifies not only that Hosea pays price, but that he also must bargain for her. However, the parable of the ransomed bride presented the symbolic actions clearly introduced by Hosea. The relationship of Yahweh and Israel had been internally destroyed by idolatry; the intercourse of Israel with idols and pagan gods symbolized by a woman who lived with a paramour. This corruption resulted in the loss of Israel's corporate identity as seen in the bride's dismissal and enslavement.

Nevertheless, the punishment and suffering were not only divine penalties for Israel's sin, but offered an opportunity for a change of heart. Thus, Yahweh's intention for his people was to ransom them from slavery and restore them as His own people.

From there, they will be led again into the land of promise and empowered to fashion a new life, founded on the recognition of

⁵ James Luther Mays, Hosea: A Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 56.

God's sovereignty. The past redemption will be recapitulated in the future, although the ultimate outcome of God's action on Israel's behalf is, naturally, indeterminate. Because of the people's freedom, the future remains open.⁶

Eventually, the first stage of this marital drama symbolizes Yahweh's love for Israel and the urgent need of her severe punishment. Hosea understands all his actions in relationship with Yahweh's purpose for His people. On the other hand, the prophet clearly understands that Israel's response to Yahweh has been rejection; on the other, his interpretation of Yahweh's love for Israel is shown in the wilderness passages (Hosea 2:16-23). One modern interpretation of the outcome of Hosea's story is offered by Ward:

A new relationship was established, one which Israel had not known before. This divine act of love had no precedent. It was not merely the expression of a mutual acknowledgement, but a love persisted in spite of the meager response it evoked....⁷

Consequently, the marriage of Hosea might be interpreted as an ancient approach to some Twentieth Century marital problems, particularly in terms of forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. Indeed, I would hazard to guess that the major contribution offered by Hosea is just that simple, love forgives.

JEREMIAH 3:1-5

Jeremiah echo's Hosea in part, as pointed out in John Calvin's

⁶ James M. Ward, Hosea: A Theological Commentary (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 53.

⁷ Ward, pp. 57-58.

commentary:

God seeks to be reconciled to his people according to what a husband does who desires to receive into favor an unchaste wife, and is ready to grant her full pardon and to take her again as a chaste and faithful wife.⁸

Jeremiah said, "If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her?" According to the Old Testament law, it was forbidden; a former husband could not return to his first wife. In fact, Yahweh did not give the Jewish people the practice of divorce, but in fact, it was the Jews' "free-will" that led to divorce. In this matter they had turned away from Yahweh to establish their own solutions. Israel was likened to a wife who, having despised her husband, prostitutes herself to such adulterers (false gods) as might happen to meet her.

According to the Old Testament custom, when a man divorced his wife and she married a second time, the second marriage was considered legitimate. If, then the first husband sought to recover the wife whom he had divorced, he violated the bond of the second marriage. For this reason Jeremiah believed the land would be polluted, for he saw Israel as the adulterous wife risking separation from her husband. If Israel was "married" to false gods after "divorcing" Yahweh, could she seek to return? Consequently, the prophet calls the attention of Judah to the

⁸ John Calvin, Commentaries: Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and Lamentations (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), p. 152.

constitutional requirement of the kingdom of Israel recorded by Deut. 24:1-4, when a husband divorces his wife and she marries another man and her second marriage is severed by divorce or death, then the first husband is forbidden to take her again as his wife, for that marriage would pollute and desecrate the land. It is not even a question of willingness:

Even if she is willing to return to him, and even if he is willing to take her back, he cannot do it unless he willfully transgresses God's law. This law is applied by the Lord to his relation to Judah, his espoused wife (Jer.2:2). Judah had forgotten her husband(v.3:2), had played the harlot with many lovers (v.3:1), what does God tell her?... "And shall thou return to me?"⁹

The purpose of Jeremiah 3:1-5 is to present the theme of God's call to repent. Yahweh's concern was to re-establish the union with Israel in order that they might repent and return. The situation in Israel at the time of Jeremiah is clarified by the text of the lecture given by Professor of Old Testament Studies, Dr. Rolf Knierim:

When Josiah was just killed, then people were trembling and asked if Yahweh's anger would be forever.... In the same year 609 B.C. people asked the question, "Will the future be destroyed?" V.4. refers back to the relationship between Yahweh and Israel in the wilderness. Israel badly needed a reunion. If fact, perhaps Israel was just a hypocrite... They did want to bring Yahweh back to them, but they were not true, even to themselves.¹⁰

⁹ Theo Laetsch, Bible Commentary Jeremiah (St. Louis: Concordia, 1952), p. 46.

¹⁰ Rolf Knierim, Professor, " Theology of the Seven Century," School of Theology at Claremont, Spring, 1979.

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of hill-top evidence of sinful behavior with idols, worshiping false gods, eagerness to intercourse with foreign nations. He compares Israel to a prostitute looking out for partners by the wayside, or an Arab lying in wait for the unwary traveller in the desert. Least the accuracy of these comparisons seem lost consider them in comparison to Hosea's imagery, or consider the following statement from C.J.Ball:

We must never forget that repulsive and farfetched as these comparisons of an apostate people to a sinful woman may seem to us, the ideas and customs of the time made them perfectly opposite. The worship of gods of Canaan involved the practice of the foulest impurities; and by the revolt from Yahweh, her Lord and husband, according to the common Semitic conception of the relationship between a people and God, Israel became a harlot in fact, as well as in figure.¹¹

Israel had been guilty not only of one act of adultery, but had become like a common prostitute who gave itself to all those who worshipped idols, and had accepted foreign customs, which caused them to turn away from Yahweh. Jeremiah reinforces the charge of unfaithfulness, but adds to it a passionate plea for repentance together with the assurance of Yahweh's forgiveness and mercy.

Jeremiah's charge was that Israel had had many lovers. Israel surely had to answer "no" to the question ending v.1. It is understood that they certainly could not return to Yahweh after being so

¹¹ C. J. Ball, The Prophecies of Jeremiah (New York: Armstrong, 1890), p. 108

polluted and damaged by pagan gods and foreign nations. Israel was called to restoration and reconciliation on the condition of repentance. Yahweh counsels that if their repentance is sincere, they can truly be His people again and He can make good the promises made to their fathers.

DIVORCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW 5:31-32

The most important question concerning divorce was whether Jesus, by prohibiting divorce, actually intended to destroy a part of the Pentateuch law as it is mentioned in Deut. 24:1-4, a basic text regarding divorce in the Old Testament. Actually, Jesus did not consider divorce as a law or commandment of God such as he regarded other Jewish laws. He purposely indicated that Moses permitted divorce because of the "hardness of the hearts of the people (Matt. 19:6)." Moses allowed divorce, but he did not command it. In that case, the teaching of Jesus does not end the law, but overrides it with an earlier commandment from Genesis, 2:24-25.

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Jesus did not reject the law, but rejected what the law assumed. He taught that all those who love and obey God would not exercise their pride, for this caused disobedience and minor transgressions that turned them against God's will.

Jesus did not condemn Moses' law which permitted divorce for Israel; Jesus identified divorce as against Yahweh's intention for marriage. Jesus saw the original purpose of Yahweh in marriage was one flesh--husband and wife living together, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Derick S. Bailey states:

Jesus...implies the work of God in calling them (the married couple) together and making them "one flesh" cannot be undone without grave sin.... Hedges behind Mosaic law in order to show that from the beginning God had purposed for man and woman the mysterious destiny of union in one flesh.¹²

By abolishing the permitted divorce assumed by the Mosaic decree, Jesus did not disagree with the whole law, but he stressed that greater commands of God were in reality contradicted by the permission of divorce. Researcher Richard S. McConnel develops the argument against divorce further:

First, God's intention from the beginning that the marriage union be indissoluble is denied (by the law). Second, divorce commits an act involving adultery..."every one who divorces his wife,... makes her an adulteress; and who ever marries a divorced woman commits adultery (Matt. 5:32).¹³

Jesus brought a new light into marriage under the old Jewish law-- marriage was to be permanent. The Pharisees, who represented the Old Testament in their main concern for their law, saw marriage and divorce

¹² Derrick Sherwin Bailey, The Mystery of Love and Marriage (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 87

¹³ Richard S. McConnel, Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel (Basel: Reinhardt, 1969), p. 60.

as only legislative acts.

Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce goes back beyond Duet. 24:1-4; he began from creation--God intended permanence of marriage. Jesus emphasized that divorce was forbidden because it violated God's intention that marriage be based on the permanent union of two individuals. Furthermore, remarriage after divorce is adultery, because divorce does not destroy the union between husband and wife in marriage. Ultimately, the intention of God for His creation can be destroyed by human actions, and evil and sin can affect the divine order of God

One of the ramifications of divorce that concerned Jesus was the attitude of inferiority of women as was practiced among the Israelites. The presentation of the bill of divorcement provided more opportunity for abuse of women; it symbolized the permission of divorce and signified the man had the right to divorce his wife. How abuse is implied is the subject of Willoughby C. Allen:

In that case the divorce will have been the means of leading her to marry again, and so from Christ's standpoint, though not legally, committing adultery, because according to his teaching the divorce was ideally wrong, and the first marriage was ideally still valid.¹⁴

According to the Jewish law it was always a sin of adultery in the case of sexual intercourse between a married woman and a man who was

¹⁴ Willoughby C. Allen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1913), p. 52.

not her husband. Indeed, only a woman could commit adultery against her husband; a husband could not commit adultery against his wife. (This situation is entirely contradicted in Mark 10:11-12).

Obviously, if Jesus agreed that unchastity was the only ground for divorce, he agreed with the School of Shammai that held the position that adultery (unchastity) is the only ground of divorce--no one shall divorce his wife unless there is found unchastity in her (Mtt. 5:32). McConnell brings together a summary of Jesus' attitude towards divorce, with special reference to Matthew 5:31-32:

(1) Jesus in his statement on divorce, annuls a Mosaic ordinance but this does not imply an attack on the law as a whole. The Mosaic decree of temporary validity, was to eliminate certain evils in regard to divorce as well as put to check on irregularities. (2) Jesus' command on divorce aimed at restoring God's primary will in regard to marriage as established in the beginning. These commands eliminate all concessions to the sin of man.¹⁵

MARK 10: 11-12

In these verses of Mark it is made clear that the man who divorces his wife and remarries another woman commits adultery. (See: Mtt. 19:9, Lk. 16:18.) The fact, it is stated conversely, that a woman who divorces her husband and remarries is guilty of adultery. But as only a man could obtain a bill of divorce, the guilt of adultery can be applied to either party of the marriage in the case of a divorce. Compare Mark's writings to Matthew's and Luke's writings and you will

¹⁵ W.F.Albright et al., Matthew (New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 65.

see different wordings that give the same message (Mk.10:11-12; Mtt. 19:9; Lk. 16:18): marriage is permanent and either or both parties in a marriage are committing a sin if a divorce is sought after. This sampling of the different wordings may indicate that Jesus spoke on the subject of marriage on more than one occasion, and that though he worded the message with slight differences the meaning never varied. Jesus is concerned about God's original intention for His creation:

... God's original purpose in creating the human race as witnessed by His division of it into two sexes; He meant that each male should be united to one female in an indissoluble union. The argument is thus, in essence, an appeal to God's original intention in instituting marriage.¹⁶

Mark strongly stresses the point which is new to Jewish people--the man who divorces his wife commits a sin, but it is not adultery--it is a sin against God's command (Gen. 2:24). But, if in addition to divorcing your wife, you marry another woman, then you add the sin of adultery to the sin of divorce. Mark's interpretation of divorce is based on the Roman law rather than Jewish custom:

If it is original, the words in Mark may represent an adaptation of Jesus' teachings to the situation of a Gentile Church (Jewish law did not allow a wife to divorce her husband) or it may be that Jesus himself was looking beyond the custom of his own people (he can hardly have been altogether unaware of Gentile practices).¹⁷

¹⁶ D. E. Nineham, Saint Mark Baltimore: Penguin Books 1975), p. 261.

¹⁷ C. E. B. Cranfield, The Gospel According to St. Mark (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), p. 322.

According to Jewish custom, a man could divorce his wife for any reason, from adultery to burnt food. Evidently, Gentile women could divorce their husbands, though the grounds for such actions are not mentioned in Mark. Mark applies Jesus' message universally, to Jew and Gentile alike, marriage is permanent, and divorce and remarriage are sins.¹⁸

PAUL -- I CORINTHIANS 7:10-15

Paul hands down a command from Jesus to this effect--a wife is not allowed to divorce her husband, and if separation is necessary, she should remain single or be reconciled to her husband. On the other hand, the husband should not divorce his wife. Paul is writing to a Gentile Church and so addressed an answer to the situation of Christians married to non-believers. His advice to those in such a situation was that if the couple wished to remain married, their children would be consecrated through the Christian parent. However, if the non-believer wanted a divorce, the marriage should be dissolved, for "God has called us to peace." (1 Cor. 7:15)

Paul counsels the pagan and Christian partners to continue living together so long as the former desires it; if, however, the unbeliever departs let him go --- the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.¹⁹

Paul is simply restating God's original command in Genesis as Jesus

¹⁸ John R. Martin, Divorce and Marriage (Ontario: Herald Press, 1972), p. 322.

¹⁹ Bailey, p. 94.

had interpreted it.

Paul realized the severe problem in the Church in Corinth. He was attempting to instruct the Gentile converts through his writings. His letters counseled believers and non-believers on the appropriate action in each case. If Christians were married to each other, it was permanent; if a Christian were married to a non-believer, it was permanent as long as the non-believer wished to stay; Paul even took it a step further, if you had a strong desire to marry, by all means marry; but, if you did not have plans to marry in the immediate future, then you should consider staying single. Paul does not hand down these commands as his own, but rather as from the Spirit of God. Paul saw man's first priority should be to love God and to give his whole self to the Lord. In Paul's eyes, the best way to wholly committed to God was to remain celibate, and so his advice to his flock was influenced by this belief.

THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

Moses allows divorce because of the hardness of peoples' hearts, but the purpose of God in creating man and woman is that they shall become "one flesh" in marriage (Gen. 2:24). Husband and wife become one flesh by sharing common interests, common goals in life. When a man and a woman, fulfilling the purpose of God, have become one flesh through sexual intercourse, and emotional and intellectual understanding, neither a third party, nor a man-made law, may be allowed to disrupt their union. Nowhere is it stated clearer than in Matthew 19:6, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

Divorce is allowed in Jewish custom and law "for your hardness of heart." (Mtt. 19:8) Divorce is acceptable in Church and society when the situation is irreparable, especially in cases of adultery. Perhaps the Church and State were forced to allow divorce when the social situation could not be controlled. Divorce, in terms of the theological point of view, is wrong because it is always against the original order of creation. The wrong lies not in a legal act of divorce, but in the divorce as a symptom of the condition of the marriage and of the sinful nature of the persons involved. In certain situations divorce may be justified because of the evil character and conduct of individuals, but the divorce does not necessarily improve the attitudes of the hearts of those involved. However, even Christians, sometimes dominated by the sinful environment in which they live, may, by the power of faith, have a second marriage which is a true fellowship

and satisfactory mutual relationship.²⁰

During a personal interview with Dr. Howard Clinebell, who is a Professor of Pastoral Counseling, he put forth the following ideas:

"Sometimes there is a need to separate; this is just as wrong as actual divorce; this is the breaking up of God's purpose for husband and wife to perfect a union as "one flesh". Marriage is a divine institution originated by God. The intention of that institution is that male and female realize a spiritual union. Therefore, the union visualized for marriage is of an indissoluble kind. It is such a thorough merging of the two personalities into one life that disjunction is unimaginable. It is like the union of the ingredients for a cake. Once they are mixed together into the cake dough, it is inconceivable that they may once again be separated into their individual parts."²¹

The denial of divorce has no basis in and of itself; it is a senseless and arbitrary regulation if it is lifted off its foundation in Genesis 2. It is not the act of divorce or remarriage that constitutes the offence. It is those acts when viewed in the light of a vision of what marriage should be. The dissolution is not offensive unless one understands that the union itself is indissoluble.

²⁰ Shaner, p. 87.

²¹ Personal interview with Howard Clinebell, Professor of Pastoral Counseling, School of Theology at Claremont, Spring 1977.

Actually, there is the announcement of the will of God (Gen. 2) for human existence. That announcement paints a picture of humanity living harmoniously with the desire of God for his creation. It vividly portrays the meaning of absolute obedience to the intention of God for persons and nature as a whole. Part of that divine intent was that marriage be the spiritual union of male and female unassailable by all of the separating and destructive forces loose in the universe. It was designed to present human life as it might be conceived under the full reign of God. The kingdom of God which Jesus often spoke about was nothing other than the restoration of Creation to its Creator.

Yet the teachings of Jesus declares with equal force the redemptive, forgiving, reconciling and recreating intention of God. Moreover, the restoration of the Creation to its Creator is accomplished in a startling way--by the acceptance of the love of the Creator for his creation. This redemptive act of God in Christ is the good news that no person needs to be excluded from a harmonious relationship with God, no matter what offence has been committed. Therefore, the way of restoration is through loving acceptance which places humanity back in relationship with God. Man and woman are loved and accepted as they are regardless of the ethical quality of their lives. In the Old Testament Hosea took back his wife with love and forgiveness as God called back His people.

Hosea, despite the sins of his wife Gomer, took her back with love and forgiveness just as God, despite the sins of his people Israel, calls them back with kindness and mercy; "Go,

again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress. . . " (Hos. 3:1) Hosea also sees the importance of re-establishing the marriage relationship with forgiveness if the guilty party repents.²²

God's reconciliation is open for all. He reconciled His people with Him.

What does this mean for the divorced and remarried? It means that the forgiving love of God accepts into fellowship with Him those persons who have experienced the failure of marriage. The human sin which has occasioned the dissolution of the marriage relationship is forgiven. In fact, forgiveness brings freedom from the past and to the future. This option is given to a husband and a wife on the brink of divorce, or to divorcees, create more understanding and more opportunities to start a new beginning. Forgiveness is another significant tool for the broken marriage. By accepting forgiveness for themselves, they will be granted another opportunity to achieve the goal of marriage in a new relationship.

The Church must look at divorce and remarriage from different perspectives. The goal of spiritual oneness in marriage needs to be seen in terms of theological, psychological and sociological interpretations. In some cases, divorce arouses within many persons very deep and complicated feelings. The divorced person usually discovers that other people respond differently to his new status. Some married cou-

²² Shaner, p. 104.

ples feel threatened and insecure in the presence of a divorced person. However, the Church needs to discuss this reluctance to accept the divorced person in terms of love and care, so that a divorced person can feel comfortable in Church or in any Church group. The caring community needs to educate itself to be more caring, accepting and loving. The Church should be a source of encouragement, concern, support, forgiveness and growth. It should also be a place where the light of grace burns brightly, in order that people who have experienced pain and failure will be healed. One of Jesus' most touching episodes was when he confronted a woman taken in adultery. Jesus' response to her was entirely caring, supporting and forgiving. This story in John (8:1-11) gives testimony to the opportunity for forgiveness, acceptance and growth.

THE BIBLE AND MARRIAGE COUNSELING

In final assessment I have found that Hosea 3:1-5 has nothing to offer for counseling with couples who are in the process of divorce and those who are already divorced. This passage speaks about the unfaithful woman who has deserted her husband. The personal experience of Hosea with his unfaithful wife represents the relationship of Yahweh and Israel. Therefore, the passage does not deal with how to help both partners in order that they may see the problem with their marriage. What are the problems? How and in what ways are they willing to change? What compromises are possible? The passage introduces the ransom of the unfaithful without counseling the husband and wife in terms of pain

and suffering--either to rebuild a marriage or to divorce constructively.

Jeremiah seems to do some counseling for couples who are legally divorced or even in the process of divorce. He mentions divorce, but it is the divorce of Yahweh and Israel. The prophet preached to the nation the judgement of God; the wrath of Yahweh would be upon them if they did not repent. This message will not help divorced couples in the counseling situation. I strongly believe that divorce was possible in Old Testament times according to the sociological practices in their own time and social environment. According to Deut. 24:1-4, divorce was allowed for any reason, and the husband had only to present the bill of divorcement to his wife in order that she might remarry. A former husband was not permitted to remarry his former wife.

Actually, there is no passage in the Old Testament which talks about counseling with couples who are in the process of divorce, about helping them to rebuild the marriage or to decide to divorce; nor about people who are already divorced with their new life adjustments. It seems apparent that the practice of divorce was taken for granted because there was no particular law prohibiting divorce. It should be noted that the initiative lay completely in the hands of the husband. The wife could not initiate divorce. Therefore, it can be concluded that divorce in the Old Testament is based on the sociological environment peculiar to the Hebrew culture.

In the New Testament, both Jesus and Paul specifically stressed that originally marriage was God's creation and was meant to last for

life. Paul did recognize the fact that some couples were in trouble and lived in pain, so he advised them, if they were already separated, to remain single or to reconcile with their husbands or wives. Mark reveals that Jesus said that remarriage after divorce was adulterous, but Matthew realized that if divorce itself were based in adultery, then it could not be prohibited. However, all the Gospels have the same basic agreement, that remarriage after divorce is adultery.

I believe marital fidelity was not new to the Jewish people. It was the interpretation of the Torah that formed the thinking that adultery was the physical intercourse between a married woman and a man who was not her husband. Jesus separated the physical relationship (intercourse) and the mental attitude (the lustful look). He tried to get away from the tabu only against sexual intercourse and expand it to include looking at a woman with the intention of having a sexual relationship only, without regard or consideration of her as a person, is abusing her.

Jesus observed the pain and suffering of women because they were blamed by their husbands for things which led to divorce. Jesus put the blame on the men rather than the women. To Jesus' thinking, when a man looked at a woman other than his wife with the intention of having sexual intercourse with her, he committed adultery. Basically, the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels reflects his concern about the equality of God's creations. Since men alone could instigate a divorce, women suffered as victims and were considered inferior. Jesus

taught that divorce was forbidden because it destroyed the intention of God that marriage be a permanent union between man and woman. The remarriage after divorce was adultery because divorce did not dissolve the union that was the essence of the original marriage. Jesus seems to reject divorce on any grounds, he insists again and again that marriage is permanent.

I have discovered that none of these passages in the Old and New Testaments have to do with divorce in terms of advice and suggestion to help people who are in pain and suffering psychologically and emotionally. All of the different passages deal with their own problems from their own sociological and historical perspectives. I strongly believe that none of these texts would speak to the problems of our present married and divorced couples, except from the point of view of forgiveness, acceptance and reconciliation. The big question is how to counsel couples so that they understand and accept the Biblical teachings concerning divorce. Even though these passages are not framed to deal with couples considering divorce, if nothing else, they do speak about the theological attitudes toward marriage and divorce.

THE FUNCTION OF BIBLICAL TRADITION IN
DIVORCE COUNSELING

The function of biblical tradition in divorce counseling, especially in the New Testament, is to provide resources for meeting the spiritual needs of people who are in the crisis of divorce. It can provide insight which might be helpful to Christian couples to understand the teachings of Jesus, Paul and others who advised people who were legally divorced and in the process of divorce. It is an interpretation of past experiences in historical settings which modern people try to translate into the present situation.

Therefore, the function of the biblical tradition in divorce counseling is to allow and afford present day interpretation of biblical events and application of such interpretation to present events. Consider, for example, Mtt. 5:31-32, the interpretation of this passage could be that Jesus brought a new light into marriage under old Jewish law--marriage, in the judgement of Jesus, is permanent. Jesus emphasized that divorce was forbidden because it violated God's intention that marriage be based on the permanent union of two individuals. Another example, Mk. 10:11-12, gives the same message but presents it in different words: marriage is permanent and either or both parties in a marriage are committing a sin if a divorce is sought after. Perhaps Jesus spoke on the subject of marriage on more than one occasion. No matter, the message is clear--marriage is permanent.

On the other hand, Paul tempered his message to non-Judaic Christians in 1 Corinthians 7:10-15. In these passages Paul is writing to Gentile Christian converts who were possibly married to non-believers. While there were considerations for non-believers, the basic message remained the same for Christians--marriage is permanent.

Consideration of biblical tradition should not leave out the scene of the meeting between Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11). This story can be used as a basis for stressing God's understanding of human frailty, and Jesus' attitude of forgiveness toward an erring human. From this case, framed in John 8:1-11, it can be postulated that forgiveness and understanding is there (available) for those who have failed in marriage. Further, from this story can be derived the proper attitude for counselors and ministers; they should be concerned, caring, and accepting. They should offer support and forgiveness to people in the crisis of divorce.

In conclusion, I strongly emphasize that the function of biblical tradition is to afford and allow interpretation of the past for application to the present. As this interpretation effects divorce counseling, I recommend teaching the precept of permanence in marriage to the congregation as a whole, and allowing for failure in marriage to be dealt with humanely.

CHAPTER III

SAMOAN MARRIAGE

SAMOAN VILLAGE CULTURE

To better understand the Samoan culture, it is necessary to know the sociological make-up, the traditional titles, and the appropriate terms in the Samoan language, which are ingredients in the traditional Samoan marriage. To further that end, the following definition of terms should prove helpful.

1. Manaia, (n.), A chief or chief's son, single or married. This is a special position given to the elder son of the chief. It is institutionalized and endowed with certain ceremonial duties and privileges. (I disagree with Holmes when he defines "manaia" as a son of a talking chief. I have no idea why this definition was given by the particular village where Holmes did his research.¹)
2. Taupou, (n.), A daughter of a chief; usually the position given to an unmarried girl. This title could be translated as "The Village Maiden." The position is held, according to the Samoan culture, by a virgin singled out for her charm, beauty, and manners.
3. Faleupolu, (n.), A group of orators or "talking chiefs" in a village council consisting of different levels. Usually in a faleupolu there is one tuua, or "high talking chief", who has the traditional right to carry an enormous fue (fly whisk, made of coconut fabric and with a two to three foot handle), and a tootoo (a ceremonial walking stick carried when outside). In some villages all the orators have the right to carry the fue and the to'oto'o.
4. Tulafale lagolago, (n.), Some orators of the faleupolu are designated to substitute for the tuua in his absence. The duties include welcoming the significant visitors to a village, and

¹ Lowell Holmes, Samoan Village (London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), p. 32

organizing village meetings in cooperation with the pulemu'u (official representing the central government of another village, "mayor"); he also gives a speech to the special visitors after he has defeated all the orators in a debate.

5. Aumaga, (n.), the entitled men of the village who represent the main labor force in both household and village units. They are sons of chiefs, talking chiefs, and other members of the village aristocracy. This group of young men is organized into a cooperative work group. They assist the chiefs and the fale-upolu in ceremonial activities, and carry the bulk of the responsibility and effort in all village cooperative enterprises.²
6. Tulafale, (n.), Originally this title belonged to the priest of the community. He was the one who performed all rituals, conducted pagan worship, and performed wedding ceremonies. When Christianity was introduced to the Samoan people in 1828, (by two Tongan Wesleyans Missionaries, before John Williams arrived in Sapapali'i in 1830), the pastor took over all the tulafale's functions in spiritual matters. The tulafale is, today, a spokesman for the manaia (See: Faleupolu)
7. Faalupega, (n.), The official list of names and relative ranks of a village's chief and talking chiefs, with the appropriate esoteric and symbolic references which relate to the social and political structure of the village.³
8. Tauga, (n.), The presentation of food, given by a boy to a girl he is courting. This food presentation consists of a pig, chicken, cooked fish and "taisi" (cooked, sliced taro or yam). The tauga signifies the respect and humble courting of a girl. The tauga is displayed and announced to the whole immediate family.
9. Ai, (n.), Another presentation of food, given before the marriage ceremony begins. The gift consist of cows, pigs, chickens, and fish.
10. Tini, (n.) A traditional poem chanted as a chorus by the high talking chief of the manaia's village in honor of the bride. It is counterpoised by the high talking chief of the taupou's

²

Holmes, p. 31

³ Holmes, p. 29

village presenting a tini in honor of the groom.

11. Falefuaafua, (n.), the wooing party of the chief's court. They initiate the relationship between the manaia and a chosen taupou. They try to win the affection of the taupou, so that she marries their manaia. They present the bride-elect with a tauga. (The manaia has nothing to do with the decision made by the faleupolu that he should marry, or which girl is chosen for him. He stays home in his own village while the falefuaafua acts on his behalf.) If the manaia is already married, the faleupolu can divorce him from his current wife and choose his second wife for him.
12. Faletautu, (n.), courting party; the actual initiation of the relationship between the manaia and the taupou. See: Falefuaafua.
13. Malaga, (n.), the journey of the falefuaafua to the village of the taupou for the purpose of wooing her.
14. Soa, (n.), a member, or group, from the Falefuaafua, who stay (s) behind after the official presentation. After the presentation of the tauga, the Falefuaafua returns to their home village. The Soa stays with the taupou to serve her and try to convince her to accept the offer of marriage. He carries her final decision back to his village.
15. Usu, (n.), a formal call by important visitors or travelers, for instance, the bride-groom and his village arriving for the wedding, or any special visitors of sufficient rank. The traveling party is formally received before given food and rest. (v.) The ceremony of welcome as performed by the faleupolu and chiefs of the host village.
16. Paolo, (n.), opposite sides on a social occasion, such as at a wedding. The bride's relatives and village are the "paolo." from the groom's party, and the groom's relatives and village from the bride's point of view.

THE TRADITIONAL HIGH MARRIAGE⁴

The marriage of the manaia and the taupou is not based on mutual affection. The manaia and the taupou do not make the decision to marry, the faleupolu of each of their villages makes the final decision. Samoan culture is one of those in which the bride and groom may see each other for the first time at the wedding ceremony. The choice of the manaia's mate includes many considerations: family background, including the geneology of the bride-elect's parents; the economic status of the family; and the girl's charm, beauty, manners, and talents as a potential homemaker and hostess. Her geneology must be connected with the royal or prominent families.

After careful consideration a choice is made and the faleupolu prepares for the Faletautu or Falefuafua. After the preparation of the tauga, the Falefuafua take the malaga to the taupou. The Falefuafua consists of three to four talking chiefs and six to eight aumaga. The purpose of the malaga is the Faletautu, or initiation of a marriage agreement between two villages. The talking chiefs are the spokesmen for the manaia. They deliberately beg and persuade the taupou to marry their manaia. This accomplished, they retire back to their own village, leaving the soa to continue the manaia's suit. The soa is chosen for his (in some cases there is more than one person appointed as soa)

⁴ Personal interview with Lefau Vailele, Advisor to the Land and Titles Court, Western Samoa, 17 July 1979. Lefau Vailele stated that "the marriage between the manaia and taupou has disappeared in the early 1950's between the Lefaga and Sala'ilua villages."

skills of persuasiveness. The soa may be comprised of as many as two tulafale and three or four aumaga. Their main function is to serve the taupou and encourage her and her village's faleupolu to accept the suit of their manaia.

The taupou has, meanwhile, consulted with her family and her village's faleupolu. The faleupolu makes the final decision for or against the marriage. Practically always, the faleupolu accepts the desire of the manaia and the falefuafua. As soon as the answer is received, the soa returns (s) to the manaia's village and proclaim the good news to their village about the accomplishment of their labors. The faleupolu from each village arrange the date of the wedding feast, and the exchange of gifts.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN TWO VILLAGES

On the wedding day the manaia and his village take a malaga, a wedding journey. They bring the Ai for the bride's village. The ai must be an enormous amount of food, and is publicly acknowledged to let the people of the bride's village know what has been given by the manaia's village. What follows the presentation of the ai is the most critical part of the wedding ceremony, the tini. The manaia's faleupolu is responsible for the correct public announcement of the tini. The faalupega of the taupou is strongly stressed, the lineage of both the father and the mother of the bride. If the tini were wrongly announced, the faleupolu of the taupou would discontinue the wedding; he is the key figure in the bride's wedding party, and is responsible

for preventing any disgraceful or insulting manner toward her. However, the tini, being of such great importance, is normally done perfectly, and the manaia and his village enter the houses of the bride's village and wait for the usu from the paolo.

When the usu is over, the marriage ceremony follows. There is one tulafale from each side of the bridal party. The two tulafale stand together and enjoy diligently instructing the bride and groom by stating: "Dearly Beloved, newly wed, we earnestly beg you to acknowledge that you are the coconut which is planted on the boundary of the two families; the connectional line of the newly established families; the shelter and the refuge of all members of the families and communities. May you be blessed, fruitful, and produce many children." At the same time the tulafale gives words of comfort and encouragement, so that they may grow together in understanding, trust and love.

After the ceremony of the tulafale, the bride's gift presentation takes place. This is the final high point of the ceremony. Her gifts equal the groom's in value, but are comprised of fine mats, common mats, and bark clothes. These gifts are presented to the groom and his village. If the bride and her immediate family cannot match the gifts of the groom and his village, the faleupolu will make up the difference from the resources of the village for a beloved taupou. After the acknowledgement of the bride's gifts with many compliments, the wedding continues on into the evening hours with feasting, dancing and music. At the end of the long day, the new wife is escorted to her new home by the new husband and the people of his village. She

enters his house and her new life begins.

THE COMMON SAMOAN MARRIAGE

The marriage of the manaia and the taupou is very different from the marriage of the common people. The common marriage begins when a boy and a girl decide they want to marry. She then goes to her parents and requests their approval and blessings. Once the marriage is agreed to, the parents of both families consult each other on the arrangements for the wedding. Both sets of parents have the right to participate in the decision-making in terms of the procedure of the wedding.

The first step is usually the boy's gift of a tauga to the girl's family. The tauga is a respectful way to court a girl, and it conveys the trust relationship between the boy and the girl. The tauga is also a request from the boy for admission to the girl's house. Upon the receipt of the tauga, the boy is allowed to have conversation with the girl in her parent's house while her mother watches over them. The intention behind this is to assure the girl remains a virgin until her wedding night. If she is not a virgin, she has given grave insult to her prospective husband by accepting the tauga and his proposal. However the significance of marriage in the Samoan culture causes parents to encourage the discipline of their daughters. Parents protect their daughters from getting involved with pre-marital sex, from participation in wild social entertainments, from flirtation, penuriousness, and loftiness. Daughters are taught to have a respectable manner, to be generous and loving, and to have humility and magnanimity. Parents

attempt to root such manners in their daughters with the intention that the girls may live happy and satisfy lives.

The young men of Samoa are trained in an alternative attitude. They are taught to serve the village to their greatest capacity. The gathering of food is a high priority for the men of the village; the preparation of a wedding feast is a grand event for the groom. It satisfies two ambitions: to feed the whole village, and to impress his bride and her family.⁵ The arrangements for the wedding feast day are made by the two fathers involved. They arrange everything, the date, the feast, and the exchange of gifts.

In a common marriage, the exchange of gifts takes place after the marriage ceremony; and no ai or tini is required. In the early days, the groom's gift was the presentation of food; but, today, money substitutes for the food. The average amount of the monetary gift is about three thousand dollars. The bride's gifts are still the traditional ones: about one hundred and fifty fine mats, hundred common mats, and barkcloth. Neither the bride nor the groom has any authority regarding the final use of the gifts. Such responsibility rests with the chiefs of the extended families, and they decide who gets what. The chiefs usually set aside the amount of the bride's gifts to the groom for her

⁵ Personal interview with Rev. Faleatua Tiatia, Consultant on Samoan Culture, Methodist Church in Samoa, Western Samoa, 17 September 1979. The philosophy of service to the community was summarized by Rev. Tiatia as follows: "To be a male in the Samoan community one is required to give something to his people, particularly food, fine mats, common mats, and barkcloth."

family, and the same is done for the groom's gift amount for his family. There is not usually any money given directly to the newly wed couple for their new family.⁶

The food for the wedding day is prepared by the bride in Samoa; her goal is to prepare a grand wedding feast. If she succeeds, she is complimented by everyone. Each member of the wedding party congratulates the couple and wishes them much happiness and many children. The ideal of marriage is highly admired by all the people. They believe that marriage is a permanent mutual relationship between husband and wife; that once married, the couple becomes one body and one spirit. This joining of two into one is witnessed by the people, declared by joining hands, and bound by the words of the tulafale.⁷

⁶ This information is based upon my seven years of ministry, in which time I have performed many Samoan marriages. In the United States, a tremendous amount of money comes from relatives, friends, and different social organizations that the couple belong to.

⁷ All of the otherwise undocumented material in this chapter is based on interview with Mr. Afoa Pe'ape'a and Rev. Faleatua Tiatia. Both described the function of the tulafale in relationship to marriage. At the time of the interview, Afoa Pe'ape'a was the high talking chief of Falelatai, Western Samoa. He was very popular in Samoan society, a man knowledgeable in Samoan traditional speeches. Many chiefs and talking chiefs came from different parts of Samoa to seek favors and blessings from this wise man. He died at the age of seventy - five. Samoa lost some of its history, some of its tie to the older culture, and a piece of its heart, with the passing of Afoa Pe'ape'a.

DIVORCE IN SAMOA

There are several grounds for divorce in Samoa. The first is based on parental authority. Parents play an important role in the couple's decisions. Parents have the right to divorce couples when they discover any unsatisfactory behavior in either party. If this happens, they encourage the couple to divorce; immediately thereafter, the couple is always legally divorced.

Another ground for divorce in Samoa is based on some parents' interest in the geneology of their son-in-law or daughter-in-law. The parents are concerned that their children have connections to the prominent and royal families of the society. Some parents encourage their children to divorce the current wife or husband and marry someone with a connection to a royal geneology, or those who are directly connected with the royal families.

In the case of the manaia, the faleupolu makes the decision who the wife should be. If the manaia is already married, and the faleupolu decides the wife is unsuitable, that marriage is immediately terminated. The search then begins for a suitable taupou. The faleupolu plays the major role in marrying the manaia to the proper wife.

Needless to say, the Samoan people also consider the international grounds for divorce, such as adultery, cruelty, and desertion, in addition to parental authority and parental social climbing.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL STRESSES ON
SAMOAN MARRIAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

Preparation for any new situation or place is needed by an individual before he goes to the new environment. People who were brought up in a rural life for many years will probably have some difficulties in adjusting to an urban lifestyle; the environment is greatly different from their past experience. In interviews with people who had recently migrated from Samoa to the United States, the majority indicated that it was difficult to adjust to their new physical surrounding, and their neighboring families of non-Samoans. The lifestyle of Samoa is very comfortable. Technical developments have minimal impact on Samoa, and pollution and rush hours are non-existent. The Samoan people live together in intimate family units within the larger extended family group, which is in turn part of an interdependent community. Almost every family works on their own farm: most of their food, such as taro, taamu, ufi, and fa'i,⁸ is prepared, preserved and stored on the farm. The family members provide their own tools and equipment to use on the farm; and, in general, the household is economically self-sufficient.

Basic Samoan culture has changed very slowly. The last major change took place with the adoption of Christianity in 1828.⁹ This was

⁸ Taro and taamu are tubers, ufi is a tapioca like food plant, and fa'i are green bananas.

⁹ Holmes, p. 68.

perhaps the greatest cultural impact on the Samoan society in general. However, the family structure has remained fairly static for countless generations. Father is a stern and reserved figure who has the final decision on almost important family and household matters. Mother is subservient to father; her responsibilities are within the home and family. She is a faithful wife and guardian of the young children. Young men and women marry when they are old enough to carry the responsibilities of a family.

In contrast, the family and individual lifestyle in the United States are part of a changing social complex. A long history of social progress in the United States has given women an important voice in the economic decisions, as well as many other factors, of the American family. In Samoa, ninety percent of the women are housewives and are responsible for the upbringing of the children. Some may be called upon to help their husbands in the plantation work at peak work period during the year, but the vast majority are engaged in the daily routine of home and family.

The American society contrasts in many ways with which Samoans, both men and women, are not familiar. The equality of all people, and the right of the individuals to participate in the decisions affecting their fate, which began as political needs in the United States, have been selectively diffused into other social relationships:

A superficial equalitarian belief has been seen as characteristic of informal encounters among American people, and privilege by ascription runs against the grain of at least their

acknowledged social values.¹⁰

Thus, marriage in the American society, which by tradition legitimized the authority of men over women, has been affected by the emphasis on the equality of the sexes, particularly in decision making, equal rights, and family affairs. Under these circumstances, the husband's and wife's relationship has become a subtle blend of two compatible yet contradictory orientations.¹¹

Samoaan wives have pride and respect for their husbands. They consider their husbands the heads of families, and themselves as less than equals of their mates in terms of authority in social and family affairs. Some couples who have married and lived in Samoa under the traditional family structure enter the United States without an orientation for adjusting to the new culture. Exposed to American individual freedoms, the wives form a desire to adapt to the new social equality. They realize that this freedom is the answer to the crying need which has been submerged for a long time. When American individual equality is demanded by some wives, it creates tension between them and their husbands which may lead to divorce.

I just fed up with living together as husband and wife; back home some were treated unequal--a husband control all things. But here you have your right to do what you want. If your husband punish you, then you report to the police. You can

¹⁰ J. Richard Udry, The Social Context of Marriage (New York: Lippincott, 1971), p. 13

¹¹ Udry, pp. 2-75

make your own choice without rules and regulations around you. When I was fed up with the old lifestyle, I just divorced my husband in order to find exciting and satisfactory life; a new freedom to identify myself as an important person.¹²

The Samoan culture completely ignores the importance of individualism; it strongly stresses the community life rather than the individual. When a person becomes self-oriented, rather than society-oriented, he often fails to consider others. As a result, when he becomes self-oriented he offers less support for family and community. Self interest carried to an extreme can begin to disregard the needs of the social life, family or marriage.

The philosophy of individualism asserts that the value of the individual is superior over the value of social groups. The goals of the individual are given preference; and his or her well-being and happiness are the criteria for social and individual decisions.¹³

Samoan men and women migrating to the United States can be influenced by Western ideologies which may cause them to divorce. But partnership between husband and wife can be further disturbed in the United States by the industrial society when production is transferred from the home. In Samoa ninety percent of the married women never work outside the home but devote themselves entirely to the management of the home. There is a big change when some couples come to the United States; the economic role of the Samoan married woman undergoes

¹² Personal interview with Lua Samu, California, 16 August 1978.

¹³ Udry, p. 13

dramatic change. as an increasing number of these enter the labor force for pay. Earning the first wages creates a realization in a wife that she can stand on her own feet. A new sense of independence on the part of a wife can threaten a husband and thereby sorely try a marriage. ¹⁴

Another factor forcing change in marriage for Samoans in the United States is a psychological factor, the absence of the authority of the sociological and political structure of the village and extended family. Some couples were dominated in Samoa by the authority and power of the matai system (chief system). The couples were surrounded by the sociological and political structure of the family and community in which they lived. They lived according to the family and community structure rather than exercising independent judgement in what they needed as couples or as individuals. Some people left Samoa to escape family and social structure of rigid rules and responsibilities to the families and chiefs. Here in the United States this structure has disappeared, and people attempt to exercise their own freedom in many aspects, particularly the things which they were arguing about before they came to America, for instance, money. The absence of authority for some couples feeds the causes of divorce. In some cases, couples divorce because they want personal freedom and a new life.¹⁵

¹⁴ Personal interview with Tolu, Carson, California, 3 April 1978.

¹⁵ Based on personal observation and conversation with divorcing Samoan couples during counseling. See Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL STRESSES ON
SAMOAN MARRIAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

SAMOAN MARRIAGE TODAY IN RELATION TO DIVORCE

The life of Samoan couples in Los Angeles has been rapidly transformed from a small rural agricultural community in an unindustrialized country to a highly industrialized and highly urbanized nation. Indeed, it should not be surprising that a couple's relationship can be transformed by the drastic change forced upon them by a new society. The husband and wife may find it necessary to invent a new relationship, one with a new life partner. Most husbands and wives I have talked with in divorce counseling expressed their desire for "change"; they wanted a new life experience, divorce from old partners and marry with a new one. The concept of some husbands was to marry a new woman in order to experience a better life in the new environment.

Most couples whom I have talked with said that Los Angeles is a beautiful place to start a new lifestyle, both sociologically and economically. For example, a woman found a good job also found that she could meet her own living expenses. In the case of a man. He may get a promotion and earn good money; he discovers that he, too, can meet his own economic needs. In most families the husband provides the financial support for the family, and the wife continues to take care of the house and children. A not uncommon occurrence, the husband meets an attractive woman at work, they begin a courtship, and end up

living together illegally. Some Samoan couples at divorced due to just this set of circumstances.¹

Actual, Samoan Christian marriages are on the increase in the United States, especially in Los Angeles. Interviews with Samoan ministers in Los Angeles area indicate that as many as eighty percent of Samoan couples in Los Angeles were married in Church. Another twenty percent were married by legal agents and later requested to have religious ceremonies in the Church.² In spite of these facts, couples who have been married in Samoa, and even in the United States, have no marriage counseling, neither professional counselors nor ministers, to help them make plans and help them foresee and solve potential problems in the area of courtship, marriage and family relations. Samoan couples are not familiar with the role of the marriage counselor; the help, advice and guidance offered by the counselor can give the couple involved in working out solutions to their problems to the best advantage of both husband and wife, interpersonally and legally. In fact, there is a strong need for marriage counseling for Samoan couples in all stages of interpersonal relationship: pre-marriage, marriage, predivorce, and post-divorce.

A group of ministers and laypersons gathered together to

¹ From a social gathering in Los Angeles with members of the Samoan community, 4 May 1979

² Personal conversation with Rev. Timoteo Atuatasi, 2 March 1976; Rev. Mika Levasa, 23 June 1978; Rev. Ulisese Sala, 7 July 1979 Los Angeles, California.

discuss and share their experiences in and about the ministry. They all admitted that no one was doing premarriage counseling on the necessity of sharing in marriage and ways that a couple could form a firmer bond. Some ministers said it was because they had such short notice before the actual wedding, and others said they thought the ceremony of marriage was more binding than counseling could be. All admitted that they were untrained in the particular field of marriage counseling.³

In spite of the fact that Samoan people consider marriage as a permanent covenant between husband and wife, there was a time when divorce was common and the divorce untainted. After all, they lived in open houses and in a community which welcomed anyone: strangers, divorced people, married people, or single people. The manaia and chiefs could divorce and remarry. It was probably the influence of Christianity which placed a greater emphasis on the immutable nature of the marriage relationship between husband and wife which the Samoans have incorporated in their social ethic. Now Samoan people see marriage as a permanent covenant between husband and wife, and do not consider it as a temporary agreement.⁴

The absence of premarriage counseling for Samoan couples perhaps

³ Personal conversation with Rev. Ilai Tupuola, Rev. George Agai, Rev. Foisia, Rev. Dr. Mila Maefau, Rev. Ulisese Sala, Rev. Faafoina Iofi, and nine laypersons, Carson, California, 17 October 1978.

⁴ Lowell D. Holmes, Samoan Village (London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), pp. 75-88

leaves potential problems unsolved, and the lack of preparation for living together, psychologically and emotionally. It is understandable that Samoan couples need help and guidance in marriage. They both need to adjust their lives in particular in relationships influenced by the urban area and industrial society. The divorce rate of Samoan couples in Los Angeles are highest in the unskilled, low to middle income fairly educated class (Samoan education level), with progressively more stable marriage in the higher income and education brackets. The divorce rates are highest in the low social ranking families, people who have no inherited social prominence, in the Samoan islands hierarchy of royal families or officials.⁵

The most significant phenomenon in the contemporary life of Samoan couples living in Los Angeles is their search for their identity. Somehow ninety percent or more of Samoan couples do find each other and marry within the Samoan community. They rarely affiliate with outsiders, and the occurrence of mixed marriages is low. Samoan couples establish their own social groupings with which they enjoy spending their leisure time. They form their own activity groups for bowling, golfing, and travel; and more purely social groups for diversions such as drinking, dancing, and bingo. Some even have a savings plan together and at Christmas they share the savings equally with every member of the group.

However, these social groups seem to increase the divorce rate

⁵ Refer to the Results of the Questionnaire,

among Samoan couples. The warm fellowship and exchange of ideas and feelings create tensions between husband and wife. There were many cases of divorce and remarriage to new partners between members of these groups. Surprisingly, one of the groups formed by a Church, called the "Couples' Group" showed the dramatic instance of divorce and remarriage of new partners with the membership of the group. This group often met outside the Church in order to explore their understanding about the world they lived in. They held most of their meetings in private homes, restaurants, and in social entertainment. They often shared their experience with the church and ministry. The group was terminated when the high incidence of divorce and remarriage became evident.⁶

SOCIAL READJUSTMENTS

One significant point, if close observation of divorced men and women is made, is that divorcees tend to drop out of their social groups and to avoid their friends. Apparently, after a divorce, a man or woman feels that he or she, being single, can no longer fit into the couples' social group.

Mostly we had a group of friends in common. We ran around with a group of other married couples. I think some of them knew it was coming. I still see some of them occasionally and we're friendly, but my main social group now is very different. I think it was mostly my idea and my doing to break up with the group. I use to get invitations and such from them, but I wanted to end it. I was sort of out of place. I didn't want to rock the boat by banging around, so I just stopped seeing them and built up another group of single friends.⁷

⁶ Samoan Church in Los Angeles area.

⁷ George Levinger, et al., Divorce and Separation (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p. 224.

Some divorced Samoan men and women are entirely satisfied to stay single, or remarry only after some years have passed. Others, after their divorce, rush to get married again, because they feel strangely out of place with friends and family. The divorced person either wants to remarry and retain his social circle or to gain a new set of friends, especially singles. In either case, the divorcee wants to be with people who he trusts to understand him and his situation. The situation of divorce and separation is particularly painful and confusing, and not easy to cope with, especially alone.

Some divorced individuals, it seems adjusted easily to a new social situation because they have much contact with church groups, friends, family and community. However, in spite of the fact that some have no problem adjusting to new situations it is an external adjustment which does not deal with the emotional upheaval inherent in divorce. The internal emotions he is experiencing call for someone who understands, cares, and show concern to help the person going through the divorce. The emotional turmoil the divorced person is experiencing, the pain, the frustrated feelings of loss, depression and failure, must be dealt with. Social and inner adjustment involves a basic reorientation and change of attitude toward the self, and a reorientation does not begin of itself or by itself, nor immediately; it takes time and care.⁸

⁸ Levinger, pp. 1-225

DIVORCE AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILDREN

The emotional reaction of children to divorce often is extreme. Some children attempt to save their parents from divorce. Some are not surprised by their parents decision to divorce because they have witnessed many arguments and open conflict in their homes. A friend of mine is a minister. He tried to file a divorce through his church. He told me that he had deliberately been willing to divorce his wife because of some disruptions, cruel disrespect in her manner toward himself, and impolite attitude toward him before the congregation and his friends. Her actions and attitudes toward him created tension in him and it was better for him to ask for a divorce rather than allow the continued conflicts. He regarded arguments with his wife as a waste of time. He turned to the President of the Samoan Methodist Conference and his cabinet for help and they advised him to continue loving her and did not allow him to divorce her; and his children tried their best to save the marriage.⁹

Divorce is a major crisis for young children, just as it is for parents. Parents should be encouraged to prepare their children for the upcoming divorce by explaining the reason for the separation. Otherwise, children may believe that they are responsible for the divorce. At the same time, they may believe that no one will take care of them when both mom and dad are leaving them.

⁹ Personal interview with Salu, Samoa, 18 August 1979

In general, divorce increased the emotional distance between children and their fathers; girls usually grew closer to their mother. Children of divorce were rarely close to their fathers, before, during, or after divorce... children from divorced homes are less likely to have strong religious ties, and are more willing to make interfaith marriages. Though they often doubt their ability to be happy in marriage, they are not generally bitter about it, but are more cautious, realistic, afraid.¹⁰

Parents must prepare their children for their divorce. This preparation depends on the children's ages. An infant will not be able to say, "Where is Mom?" or "Where is Dad?" But the child would miss the presence of his father or mother. After the divorce, the child needs to see both of his parents on a regular basis. When the children are old enough to speak and to understand, they may ask where mom or dad is if that parent disappears for a few days, weeks or months. It is a mistake for a couple to divorce without preparing their children for it first.¹¹

Children suspect something is wrong if the parents begin to quarrel or fight, and go around with long faces. Some children do not bother to ask parents what is wrong because the response from the parents might be more than the children could bear. Parents must understand, though, that their children have the right to question them about what is wrong in the family, especially the parents' relationship. Parents must let children know why there is tension

¹⁰ Carol Mindey, Mother (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p.94.

¹¹ Levinger, pp. 224-230

in the family, and at the same time clearly explain to the children that they are both trying to solve the problem between them. It is to be understood that all these exchanges between parents and their children are essential to the children's feelings of security. Be aware that when the situation between parents increasingly worsen and they both ignore their children, the children dare not mention it and so become extremely anxious. The most obvious suggestion for parents who are in the process of divorce, in relationship to the children, is to tell the children that conflicts in marriage, though unpleasant, are not the end of the world; and that no matter what happens they will have two parents to love them and take care of them. If the divorce is going to take place, parents may be able to sit down with children and express each one's feelings about divorce; parents should clearly tell the children that they are not going to live together anymore. Parents will have to decide which is the best way to tell their children about the divorce; some couples probably would be better off telling their children separately, because of the danger of an emotional flareup and bitter accusations coming out if they tell their children together.

Parents must tell their children the truth, keeping it simple; not going through all details because children would not likely understand. Parents should remember to make it clear to the children that the children are not the cause of the divorce. If the children ask questions, attempt to clarify the cause in simple words, "Mom and I (or "Dad and I...) have not been getting along together, we have some

conflicts and argue often; therefore, we have decided we would both be happier if we did not live together. And you can stay with Mom (or Dad) whichever you feel most comfortable with." Parents should never give children false hope, but rather they should explain to them very clearly and honestly. In the case of a trial separation, the explanation might be that Dad and Mom are not happy together so have decided that it is better to live apart for a while and think about everything that has been happening between them but that they will try their best to settle the misunderstandings and differences. If later it becomes necessary to consider divorce, parents should again sit down with their children and explain what is happening and why.

Since parents have children, a family remains after the disruption of the marriage-- a family that must settle into a new structure. An entirely new household of one parent and the children differs from the usual lifestyle they had experienced. Other times they move in with other relatives and then begins the adjustment to a whole new life. Here, again, the family structure changes. If dad or mom remarries the entire life of the children will change according to the new family. The life in a new home with a step-father or step-mother can cause deep problems of adjustment to the new situation for children. There are great numbers of children affected by disruptions at any time during their childhood years:

Divorce tends to affect children who are younger and thus would allow more time in the disrupted state; however, divorced women remarry considerably faster than widows. The duration of the disruption will probably remain between five and six years, especially if remarriage rates continue to level off.¹²

In eighty-five percent of the cases I have encountered with Samoan couples, the father leaves and the mother remains. The absence of a father may damage a child's mental, sociological, and economical future. Samoan children suffer from the absence of their mother or father because they are entirely dependent on their parents, even if they themselves are married adults.

REMARRIAGE

Most divorced persons encounter little difficulty in finding another mate. They are more likely to remarry than single persons of the same age are to marry. Perhaps, some divorced persons do not wait for a long period before remarrying because they want to continue the life they had before, as a married man or woman. Some probably remarry because they could not stand to be without a husband or wife because they strongly depend on their mates for financial and emotional support, or in some cases, they need someone to care for their home and children.

Men divorced in their twenties are usually remarried within less than two years, while women divorced in their twenties are remarried in three years or less... Those women with

¹² Levinger, p. 280

children are almost as likely to remarry and do as quickly as those who are childless at divorce.¹³

So most persons who remarry after divorce do so a relatively short time after their previous marriage terminates. This habit is a particularly common occurrence among young people. For psychological reasons, many divorced persons want to remarry in order to release and heal some of the tensions caused by the previous divorce.

The remarriage is another new world in the sense that it involves different feelings and understandings between the new partners. Remarriage may be a possible answer to divorce, and provide a new lifestyle for both husband and wife. Samoan people regard a woman who makes many marriages as a prostitute; a man who has many marriages is considered a seducer. However, one remarriage is accepted in the Samoan community. In fact, remarriage is highly encouraged in the Samoan community by one's friends, extended family and the community, particularly for men who have much responsibility in the extended family or community. A man who is responsible for governing the village, a high chief of the village, or a head of the extended family, needs a partner who will lighten the heavy responsibilities of office by providing a pleasant home life.¹⁴

Divorce and remarriage should be carefully considered by the divorced person, in terms of the economical, sociological and

¹³J. Richard Udry, The Social Context of Marriage (New York: Lippincott, 1971), p. 460

¹⁴Personal conversation with the Faleupolu, Pata, Falelatai.

emotional needs of that individual. Then the divorced person should relax and prepare for another courtship. A divorced man usually has less difficulty beginning dating, adjusting to a new partner, than a divorced woman does. This is because she must carefully select someone who will take care of her, and in the case of a divorced woman with dependent children, she needs someone who will be a good and willing step-father to her children. On the other hand, there are people who are severely damaged emotionally by the experience of a failed marriage and a painful divorce. For these people, remarriage presents new problems as the previous problems have not yet been resolved.

The crisis of divorce brings to the surface unresolved feelings from the past that have stood in the way of happiness... this process, too, is painful and far from simple, but it offers the opportunity for us to accept our feelings for what are and thereby blunt their hidden control over our lives. Instead, they will remain as a kind of unconscious emotional roadmap -- full of twisting roads, detours, and blind alleys--that prevent us from ever arriving at our destination. The crisis of divorce brings with it the chance to shed light on this roadmap, straighten out some roads, and avoid blind alleys in the future.¹⁵

Remarriage is a process of reconstruction and redevelopment of one's lifestyle. Children and remarriage involves many factors, such as a mother and child (ren) system incorporating a new father; a father and child(ren) system including a new mother. Both cases involve reorientations and reorganization of all the people involved

¹⁵ Mel Krantzler, Creative Divorce (San Rafael: New American Library, 1974), pp. 37-38

into a new lifestyle in a family situation. There are possible emotional complications introduced into a situation, especially where there are children from both sides of new relationship; or the problem may arise from the anger, hatred and frustration of a child toward his former parent now expressed toward a new father or mother. And at the same time, the attitude of a new mate toward his new child (ren) may differ from that of their real father or mother in its depth and expression, especially in the beginning of a new situation:

Children old enough to know their absent parent may present some other problems of adjustment. They may have strong loyalties to their father (or mother) and may regard their new parent as an intruder. They may after the frank fashion of children, make no effort to conceal their animosity, and may enjoy comparing their new father unflatteringly with their own father... The step-father, on the other hand, is a person constantly in evidence, who disciplines them, forbids them to go to the movies and monopolizes the affection of their mother.¹⁶

Seen from the child's point of view, the offending step-parent often has the earmarks of a tyrant and usurper. This is a situation which requires an understanding step parent and a great deal of patience and persuasion. Fairness and consistency in tandem with warm respect and love will often overcome the problems of a strained relationship between a step-parent and a resentful child.¹⁷

¹⁶ Francis E. Merrill, Courtship and Marriage (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 364.

¹⁷ S.C.Hill, "Step-Parent/Child Psychology, The Recalcitrant Child," Parent Teachers Association, Long Beach Unified School District, 18 September 1979.

Any and all of the outlined problems, premarriage counseling, predivorce counseling, divorce and remarriage counseling can all be met with the proper training of ministers and competent laypeople.

POST DIVORCE COUNSELING

The post divorce counseling begins when the husband and wife have made the decision that the marriage will terminate. The law Court decision with regard to the children's custody has been made. Then post divorce counseling can center on the feelings of the exhusband and exwife toward each other and toward the children. Counseling can also include attitudes toward members of the extended family, friends, community, work situation, and church. Under no circumstances should stereotypical judgements be made about the emotional status of the divorced individual:

In treatment, divorce counselors must be able to distinguish the fairly well-adjusted clients thrown into emotional imbalance by the catastrophe of divorce and not categorically treat them on the assumption that they are emotionally ill in any fundamental sense.¹⁸

¹⁸ Esther Fisher, Divorce: The New Freedom (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 121.

RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was distributed to thirty five Samoan couples, twenty divorced husbands and twenty divorced wives in Los Angeles area. Twenty seven couples, eleven divorced husbands and fifteen divorced wives responded. There are two parts of the questionnaire - part I is designed for both who were legally divorced and husbands and wives who are in the process of divorce; and part II is for husband and wife who is in the process of divorce.

PART I

The following questionnaire is designed to learn about how Samoans experience and think about divorce. It is better to have each person fill out a questionnaire alone and then compare results for agreement and disagreement. Each statement asks for a response ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

PART II

The following questions are particularly designed for the wife or husband who is in the process of divorce; to help them to rebuild the marriage or decide to divorce.

PART I

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
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1. A Christian Doctrine concerning divorce should be based solely on biblical teachings.

(Response: Seventy three

<u>17</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
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2. Many of the assumptions about divorce in both Old Testament and New Testament have been proven inaccurate and development of Christian Ethic concerning divorce must include a critique of those assumptions.

(Response: Seventy

<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>
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3. Church should encourage couples to deal with physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of divorce.

(Response: Sixty nine

<u>18</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>7</u>
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4. Seeking divorce counseling should be encouraged by ministers.

(Response: Seventy four

<u>8</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>
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5. Women who divorced should not be respected by friends and other people.

(Response: Seventy two

<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>38</u>
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<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
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6. Men who divorce should not be respected by friends and other people.

(Response: Sixty eight)

<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>8</u>
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7. Personally, I would have difficult considering divorce for myself or someone close to me except under extreme circumstances.

(Response: Sixty seven)

<u>15</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
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8. As a matter of general understanding, I approve the woman's right to choose to divorce her husband.

(Response: Seventy)

<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>1</u>
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9. As a matter of general understanding, I approve the man's right to choose to divorce his wife.

(Response: Sixty eight)

<u>2</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>
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10. The fundamental cause of divorce is searching for a new life.

(Response: Fourty one)

<u>2</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
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11. I find it difficult to imagine circumstances in which I would condone a divorce.

(Response: Sixty seven)

<u>14</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
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<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
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12. Young couples should have knowledge of divorce.

(Response: Fifty eight

<u>11</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
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13. Adultery is a sickness that leads to divorce.

(Response: Seventy two

<u>6</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
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14. I would support legislation that encourages couples to remain in their marriage and attempt to renew their marriage.

(Response: Sixty nine

<u>22</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
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15. I personally feel uncomfortable when discussing issues regarding divorce.

(Response: Forty two

<u>10</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
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16. Women are psychologically and emotionally better able to divorce men, than men to divorce women.

(Response: Seventy four

<u>0</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>3</u>
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17. Men are psychologically and emotionally better able to divorce women, than women to divorce men.

(Response: Sixty eight

<u>3</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>0</u>
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<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
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18. It is ultimately man's responsibility to provide economically for his family.

(Response: Seventy six

<u>0</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>
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19. Unfaithfulness in marriage requires divorce.

(Response: Seventy eight

<u>10</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>2</u>
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20. Faithfulness in marriage may include allowing both partners to have sexual relationships outside marriage.

(Response: Fifty six

<u>2</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>8</u>
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21. When sexual relationship within a marriage are mutually satisfying there is no need for divorce.

(Response: Sixty eight

<u>7</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>4</u>
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22. Divorce merely ends the husband and wife roles, but not the parent's role, for parents remain parents.

(Response: Fifty eight

<u>1</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
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23. Divorce is merely another one of life's experiences.

(Response: Thirty nine

<u>10</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
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<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
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24. In some people the feeling of loss of marriage partner by divorce was not a mutually acceptable one, may be so great that there emerges a strong need to hang on to one's rage and hostility. It is as if the person needs this hostility to go on from day to day.

(Response: Thirty seven

<u>2</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
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25. Children may feel the deep anger that the parents have toward each other will destroy them.

(Response: Fifty nine

<u>14</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
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26. Some children may fear the loss of both parents as a result of divorce. It is therefore very important for the child to hear, "I will take care of you," or "I will always be with you." "I love you and always will."

(Response: Sixty seven

<u>22</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
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27. One of the causes of divorce is a couple's inability to resolve problem in a reasonable way.

(Response: Sixty seven

<u>13</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>
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PART II

The letter H represents the husband and letter W represents the wife.

1. What is wrong with your marriage? Try to point out what you think is the basic point at issue.

W: Twenty seven wives responded and the following statements were made: Lack of communication was the most frequent mentioned problem, followed by religious differences, family involvement, difference of opinions and ideas. Other comments made note of husbands being self-centered, quarrelsome. Fights, both with words and with fists were not uncommon. Some mentioned wife beating. Other problems listed were no love felt between the husband and wife, not enough money to support the family because of low educational achievement.

H: Disobedience of their wives was stressed by twenty two of the respondents. Four men responded that while they did not smoke or drink, their wives did. Six indicated that their wives had no interest in Church while the husbands did. Twenty four men stresses interference of in-laws and members of the extended family. Other items less frequently mentioned were no trust between husband and wife, no compromise, dishonesty on the wife's part, and a desire of the wife for more money. Some husbands listed as a consideration, their own and their wives social position within the Samoan community.

2. What is the matter with him or with her?

W: Twenty seven women responded: The predominant issues were: Husbands' drinking; husbands' keeping things bottled up inside them, no communication; husbands' cruelties toward their wives; husbands' gambling; authoritarian husbands; husbands' living with other women. Five women specifically listed their husbands' drinking in order to relate inner turmoil or problems.

H: Twenty four husbands responded. Twenty stresses that their wives would not listen to them but simply ignored their advice offered for the welfare of the family and children. One husband responded that his wife had run away from home. Nine husbands reported that their wives committed adultery. Some reported wives interested in men with more money or with connections with the royal family.

3. Where are the problems?

W: Of the twenty seven wives responding to this question, the following were predominant issues: Misunderstanding and mistrust between them and their husbands. The wives said that the problem were inside them but they thought that they could handle the problems in time. However, some reported that for them time was running out.

H: Twenty five husbands responded; their statements were followed: twelve husbands responded that their problems were between themselves and their wives. That no one else could solve their problems. Thirteen husbands reported a lack of mutual understanding and the absence of sharing some goals and hopes together as husband and wife.

4. Do you have a conflict in ideas about what marriage should be?

W: Twenty seven wives responded; seven answered, "Yes." Nineteen women answered, "No." One woman indicated that she thought marriage should be a giving and taking, but her husband believed that it was only taking, not giving.

H: Twenty seven husbands responded. Twenty three husbands answered, "No." Four husbands answered, "Yes." The same four husbands stressed that they knew what marriage should be from their observance of their drunken wives.

5. Was there a basic personality conflict between your father and your mother?

W: Twenty seven wives responded: fifteen answered no, twelve answered yes.

H: Twenty six husbands responded, one did not. Seventeen answered no, six answered yes.

6. Was there a serious religious difference?

W: Twenty seven wives responded. Twenty wives answered no, and two answered yes. This two wives indicated that their parents had have some religious differences.

H: Twenty seven husbands responded. Twenty six answered no, one husband answered yes.

7. How successful were the marriage of your close friends, your sister, brother, or other close relatives?

W: Twenty seven wives responded. Amongst the responses the following statement were most frequently stated: All have successful marriages; happy marriages; good relationship between husbands, wives and children; growing together in understanding; trust one another. Others were: nice house, happy children.

H: The responses from twenty seven husbands the following statements were predominant: happy family both husband and wife; children's education; the increasing of mutual understanding between husbands and wives; contributed more time, money for the church.

8. What attitude does your family, or close relatives, take toward your marital difficulties?

W: Twenty seven wives responded . The following were predominantly among the answer: families stay natural; some friends and relatives ignored our marital difficulties; some told us that marital difficulties are of life's experience; others expressed their concern and care; others blamed us when we married with wrong partners.

H: Twenty seven husbands responded. All husbands gave the following comments: encourage us to reorient and reorganize the marriage; they showed their interest and concern for us in order that we make a mature decision whether to rebuild the marriage or terminate; others they just ridicule.

9. Is part of the difficulty conflicting personalities?

W: Twenty five wives responded. Their responses were predominant: husbands very outgoing type persons whereas, we are very conservative; authoritarian husbands; husbands have right to tell wives the right dress to wear; husbands considered women inferior.

H: Twenty six husbands responded. Twenty three husbands answered yes, three answered no. The responses stated the following: some women disobey husbands; others don't understand husbands.

10. Does your spouse exhibit interest in other members of the opposite sex?

W: Twenty four wives responded. Four wives answered yes, sixteen wives answered no, and four wives uncertain (no answer). The four wives responded yes, three items stated: before they married with their husbands they often lived with other men and women.

H: Eighteen husbands responded. Fifteen answered no, two husbands answered yes, one husband gave no answer.

11. Is he or she interested in religion?

W: All the twenty seven wives responded. Twenty four wives answered yes, and three wives answered no. The predominant statements given by twenty four wives are as follow: husbands more interested in religion than the secular world; husbands spent more times in church than in bars, movies etc.

H: Twenty seven husbands responded. Twenty six answered yes. Among the responses the following comments were most frequently given: more interested in religion, always fulfil their obligation to the church; began to initiate the evening prayer at home. One husband answered no without comment.

12. Did he or she suggest or initiate reconciliation?

W: Twenty six wives responded. Twenty four answered no, two answered yes, with the following comments: he always initiate the reconciliation between me and him after serious conflicts; he is an understandable husband; he often forgives me.

H: Fourteen husbands responded. Nine husbands states: no, seven answered yes. No comments were given.

13. Is he or she usually conservative in opinion?

W: Sixteen wives repounded. Twelve wives answered no, three answered yes, one uncertain. The predominant issues were indicated: husband always liberal in ideas, opinions and decisions; he did not like to maintain the old fashion; he accepted new ideas especially to adjust to a new situation. (From Samoan lifestyle to the American lifestyle)

H: Twenty two husbands responded. Fifteen husbands answered

no, with the following statements: Wife also liberal, she lives according to the American lifestyle because she influenced with the American way of thinking; almost made all major decisions in the family; she did not like to live in old style. Seven husbands answered yes, with no comments.

14. Is he or she easily hurt in terms of feelings?

W: Nineteen wives responded. Thirteen wives answered no, the comments as follow: he did not care and understand about my feelings or other peoples' feelings so he did not easily hurt; never shared his feelings with me; he was strong enough to hold his feelings. Two wives answered yes with no comments. Four did not understand about their husbands.

H: Seven husbands responded. Fifteen answered yes and the predominant comments were: when I drank she cried; when she knew that I had problems she easily hurt; when our kids did badly in school. Two husbands answered no without further comments.

15. Is he or she enjoy home life, including sharing the joys and pains?

W: All wives responded. Twenty three gave responses indicated their husbands enjoy home life. Four answered no both home life, joys and pains; they hated to stay home; they always had somewhere to go.

H: Fourteen husbands responded. Nine husbands stated: wife both enjoy home life and shared joys and pains; wife always concerned and cared; when I was in troubles my wife always with me physically and mentally; she bears the joys and pains with me in twenty four hours everyday.

16. Is he or she a good listner?

W: All the twenty seven wives responded. Nineteen answered no. The responses were dominated by the following comments: they did not like to listen; they did not care if we tried to express our feelings about our marriages, children and some of our failures; husbands did not appreciate and accept our advice. Eight wives responded yes without comments.

H: Seven husbands gave responses, all answered yes. No further comments were given.

17. How close or far apart are you in your philosophies of life, your interest, your appreciation of things, your hobbies, your opinion and your tastes?

W: Fourteen wives responded. Twelve responded that they are different in philosophies, different in interest, but seven indicated that they appreciate things together, two have same hobbies, eight have different opinions. Two responded that they are different with their husbands in everything.

H: Twelve husbands responded in different items follow: we are closed in philosophies, we both have same interest; family prayer is our philosophy which brings us together; we appreciate things together. Ten husbands indicated that they have different hobbies. Eight husbands reported that they have different opinions. Four answered that they have same tastes.

18. In what ways you are willing to change?

W: All the twenty seven wives responded. Twenty six responses were dominated by the following statements: not to quarrel and fight anymore; no more drinks and gambling; no snobbish between husband and wife; no grumble behind husband's back. One wife answered as follow: I don't think that I would like to change my own ways.

H: Twenty husbands responded. Eighteen are willing to change and their comments were: the attitude and harsh words toward wives; no more drinks, no gambles; be patient and understand the wife's feelings; be aware of other women; consider the wife's advice. Two responded no, they feel good when they maintain their old fashions-husband makes all decisions for the family.

19. Where have you been at fault?

W: Sixteen wives responded. Fifteen answered and give comments: right in the relationship between husband and wife; it is in man and woman's hearts; when we quarrel or fight or even exchange different opinions about the same issue. One wife responded as follows: I did not know who is blamed.

H: Thirteen husbands responded and comments dominated as follow: the fault is in me because I did not listen and appreciate my wife's opinions; always consider my wife not a part of me in terms of marriage.

20. What are you willing to do to change these faults?

W: All twenty seven wives responded and their answers were dominated by the following comments: wife has to apologize and say sorry to her husband if they have some conflicts, misunderstanding etc.; wife must initiate the reconciliation between her and her husband; try to understand each other in time of crisis; support each other in love and care; establish a mutual understanding between husband, wife and kids; husband and wife must have equal rights in decision-making.

H: Twenty six husbands responded. The responses were given as follows: the cooperation of husband and wife for the welfare of the family; shared hopes and dreams together; mutual consideration between husband and wife; establish some compromises especially hard issues in the family; bear joys and pains together and support each other in crisis.

21. What do you consider the strength of this marriage to be?

W: All twenty seven wives responded and the following statements were predominant: the strength of this marriage to be forever; to consider this marriage to be firmed; to create more happiness and joy for both husband, wife and children; marriage will strong if both husband and wife create mutual understanding between themselves through trust, forgive, accept and forget one's faults.

H: Twenty five husbands responded. The statements were following: I believe that the marriage is a permanent covenant between husband and wife; keep God's commandments; both husband and wife be faithful each other; love, trust between husband and wife will bring the firm foundation of this marriage.

22. What do you believe the real difficulties to be?

W: Twenty wives responded. Nineteen gave comments as follow: I belive that husband is the source of major problems and difficulties in marriage; if a husband insists in his old ways of doing things. One wife stated: A real difficulties would be in my part. It will take me a while to trust my husband.

H: Sixteen husbands answering to the question. The following comments were predominant: if there is no trust in the family both husband and wife; wife always disobey her husband; when both husband and wife will insist and maintain his or her own way of life.

23. Where do there seem to be good possibilities for improvement?

W: All twenty seven wives responding and the statements were following: improvement could be possible in building a good relationship if both partners are willing to forget the past; mutual sharing between husband and wife; create new ways of communications rather than continue living in old ways.

H: Twenty two husbands answered the question, the following comments were predominant: both husband and wife believe in Jesus Christ; love, honest and trust each other; both husbands and wives agree to give time, money and talent to serve Christ through the Church; equal rights in decision-making, welfare of the family.

24. What compromises are possible?

W: Thirteen wives answered and gave comments: shared the failures and victories between husband and wife; each one has a voice in a particular issue which contribute for the benefit of the family; husbands tempered wives must calm down; love must be rooted in marriage.

H: Ten husbands responding the question, the following statements were predominant: compromising in communication should be free whatever husband or wife feels the need to communicate.

25. What does the husband need to do?

W: All twenty seven wives answered the question and following statements were made: husband need to be a husband and a good father; he must consider the advice from his wife; must be patient and share things in love with his wife; need to share with wife the decision-making for the welfare of the family and children.

H: Twenty one husbands gave answer as follow: husband is the boss of the family; must change his old habits of self-centered into a new person; husband must be humble and honest, must tolerate and stand firm for the improvements of the marriage and family.

26. What does the wife need to do?

W: All twenty seven wives made full responses stating one

or more of the following: wife must be a loving mother; listern to her husband; responsible for the house works and children; trust her husband; establish the trust-worthy relationship between husband and wife.

H: Twenty five husbands responding and statements were following: wives must obey their husband and the same thing for husbands. husbands must be loving fathers; wife must understand the husband's feelings; wife must not always complain even minor things but support and encourage husband toward his improvement and his growth; wife carefully cared husband's parents, brothers and sisters.

The following questions were answered by the couples.

27. Did you seek marriage counseling ? Both partners?

All twenty seven couples answered the question. Twenty two answered no, and five answered yes.

28. With whom?

Of which one sought counsel from their minister; two from their parents; one from the attorney and one from a friend.

29. For how many sessions?

A couple sought counsel from a minister has one session; couple sought counsel from their parents, one has one session and the other has two sessions; a couple sought a help from the attorney has two sessions.

SUMMARY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The participants in this survey were chosen for their knowledge and involment in marriage. These couples, divorced men and women represent a cross section of Samoan men and women in Los Angeles area. The divorce rate of Samoan couples in Los Angeles is the highest in the unskilled, low income, fairly educated low social ranking class.

The first part of the questionnaire indicated divorced men and women, as well as couples in the process of divorce, strongly stress the need for spiritual help in crisis. The divorced men and women did experience pain, suffering due to the separation from their mates.

The final findings on part 1 reflects the tremendous responses of both husbands and wives with their experience and thinking about divorce.

The part 11 of the questionnaire conveyed the urgent needs of couples to rebuild their marriage of divorce constructively. The number of couples responding to the questionnaire represented the Samoan community in the entire Los Angeles area. The expectations of Samoan couples are no different from other American couples. The desires of both husbands and wives represent the same desires of other couples who were not included in the questionnaire program.

The second part also presume that both husband and wife did

not realize the urgently needed of mutual sharing between husband and wife. The couple needs a trust relationship; mutual understanding; open communication; love, care acceptance and forgiveness in order to rebuild the marriage.

Divorced Samoan people in the Los Angeles area are looking for salvation rather than condemnation. They need somebody to understand their feelings and help them in crisis.

CHAPTER V

EFFECTIVE DIVORCE COUNSELING

WITH SAMOAN COUPLES

I believe that divorce counseling with Samoan couples has no great differences from divorce counseling with any other American couples in terms of needs, emotions, and expectations. Samoan couples also go through the stress, anger, hatred feelings, as well as feelings of loss, shame, depression and guilt. One obvious difference between Samoan couples and other American couples is that some Samoan couples will never seek help when they are in pain during pre-divorce and post-divorce periods. In the questionnaire that I distributed to twenty seven couples, eleven divorced husbands and fifteen divorced wives, there were only six couples who sought help during their marriage, five from predivorce and one from the post-divorce period. There are many couples and individuals who have had pain and hid it in themselves without seeking help. In similar circumstances, many American couples look for help through ministers, rabbis, priests, and professional counselors.

I was glad to be able to help when I talked with some Samoan couples who were in the process of divorce or reconciliation; they had hard times, opening up in our sessions together. I tried to let them express their feelings toward their partners or their needs and expectations for the marriage and family, but sometimes the purpose of the session fell through. An equally difficult problem was posed

by the divorced who also have problems expressing their feelings about new adjustments and expectations for a better life in the future. I suspect they believed that their divorce was a personal business which was not be publicly announced, but held in strict confidence.¹

Samoan people are extremely sensitive about their divorce, particularly the causes for them. Some shy away from sharing their feelings with a minister, because, for them, a minister is a holy man; his function is to deal only with the spiritual life of people; and divorce belongs to the secular world, so the minister has nothing to do with the secular world and divorce. Their concern is based on the Samoan understanding of spiritual world and secular world. Actually, it is not really a distinction between two real worlds, but rather the differentiation of people's function in the Samoan community. Samoans believe that divorce is evil and it is caused by evil; a holy man or minister must not deal with evil issues. But as a minister who understands pain and suffering of my people in divorce, I would like to help them in many ways, especially in counseling.

I have counseled some couples since I began to have interest in the effects of divorce. I used the same approach with the Samoan couples that I did with the American couples who were in the process of pre-divorce and post divorce adjustment. The main function of the

¹ Based on my experience, 6 September 1976 to 4 February 1980, Los Angeles,

counselor is to care, guide, support, and counsel the couple or individual in whatever situation he is experiencing. For divorce is a real, practical experience that involves the whole person, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically.

Divorce is the death of marriage: the husband and wife together with the children are the mourners; the lawyers are undertakers, the court is the cemetery where the coffin is sealed and the dead marriage is buried. If divorce be the death of marriage, then the grief, suffering and trauma can be expected to be somewhat the same as when a spouse dies. This is to say that an analogy can be drawn between the feelings of those who divorce and those in mourning.²

Divorce creates confusion, depression, and loneliness; anger, hatred, and tears follow. There is real pain in a person when he is affected by the emotional problems of a divorce. Divorce is a reality of life and although usually the wife is left to deal with it when the husband divorces her, the same feelings are experienced by the husband when his wife asks for a divorce. Some people in the Samoan Community criticize the person who divorces, rather than help him to reorganize his broken heart, or to release some emotional feelings. Very often, people consider the divorced person in a low class because his prestige is lost. Some members of the Samoan Community entirely ignore the significance of care and concern for people in crisis; they treat them very superficially and externally rather than trying to understand his feelings of pain, loneliness, loss and anger. The Samoan Community

² Esther Fisher, Divorce: The New Freedom (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 16.

considers death different from divorce. Death is a major loss, a complete spiritual and physical disappearance. Death can not be compared to any other reality; it is beyond man's understanding. Divorce is less important though it involves a loss. The people who are divorcing are physically present, and are seen as spiritually whole (even though they may not be).

Perhaps, in time, the Samoan people will learn not to treat divorce as a minor phenomenon if they understand the effect of divorce. Perhaps they will learn to understand the emotions of the people involved, and be able to see them as mourners needing support and understanding. Any husband and wife in the process of divorce and separation desperately need large amounts of emotional support and understanding. Ending their relationship can lead the husband or wife to the state of mourning.

Although the divorced person suffers a social finality of the marital relationship that can be compared to death... divorce is inevitably preceded by a long period of hidden or open conflict, or both, in which the emotional attachment between the spouses is deteriorating.³

This leads to loneliness, another of the feelings divorce creates in both husband and wife. Loneliness is a sign of loss, depression, frustration, and mourning. Husband, wife and children suffer from loneliness for example, if the husband leaves the home. The wife and children

³ Fisher, p. 17.

will be continually lonely until he returns.

Although divorce can be damaging, it can also can initiate a process of personal growth. Clinebell says in relationship to growth counseling:

Not all marriages can or should be saved. If one person refuses to change, or if after prolonged and competent counseling the couple is still strangling each other's personhood, separation and divorce becomes necessary. Breaking free from a person--damaging marriage can be a sign of personal growth. Coping with pain and rebuilding one's relationship after divorce can be a growth opportunity.⁴

In fact, a divorce may be necessary for both husband and wife. A divorce can become a period of personal growth as mentioned by Clinebell and supported by Jim Smoke in his book, Growing Through Divorce:

You can become a battered, bruised and bitter statistic like so many thousands of divorced persons today, or you can let your divorce be a growth producing experience in your life. You can use it to build a better You and a better life for you.⁵

So just as most experience in life can add to the better understanding of one's self, and add to the positive growth of the individual, divorce can be a growth experience.

THE PROCESS OF DIVORCE COUNSELING

Some sources differentiate between marriage counseling and

⁴ Howard J. Clinebell Jr. Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) p. 71

⁵ Jim Smoke, Growing Through Divorce (Irvine Ca: Harvest House, 1976), p. 165.

divorce counseling, assigning to the first a "focus on the potential for rehabilitation of the marital relationship," and to the second, a focus "on the dissolution of the marital relationship."⁶ I see both activities as part of the responsibility of the counselor. It is essential that all options be available to the troubled married couple. I will discuss both responsibilities under the title of Divorce Counseling.

Divorce counseling involves three periods: 1. Pre-divorce Counseling, 2. Litigation Counseling (during the process of Court action), and 3. Post-divorce Counseling.

Divorce Counseling is a process of helping a person--man or woman--who is suffering pain from psychological, emotional and spiritual turmoil. Thus, divorce counseling is urgently needed by many people who are experiencing marital problems. As an example, consider the following case history:

My health was not very good. I had insomnia, the beginning of a serious skin disturbance, and I had developed an ulcer from the tensions of the last year of my unhappy marriage. My children, who were then in the first grade and kindergarden, had begun to show signs of disturbance as a result of the tensions before their father left, but I was too distracted to know how to help them Fortunately, my anxiety became so acute that I was forced to seek help.⁷

⁶Fisher, p. 27.

⁷Carol Mindey, The Divorced Mother (New York: Mc Graw-Hill, 1969), pp. 6-7.

A divorce counselor must understand and be as aware as possible of what takes (or took) place between a man and a woman, between parents and children. Divorce counseling must be concerned and caring when presented with a variety of psychological and emotional states, as well as with the many legal, economic and social effects of separation and divorce. It is a process which starts from the point at which counseling is requested by a married couple or individual spouse. It begins with their need for help with internal and external expressions of stress.

Further, divorce counseling should concentrate on reorganization of the whole person in his present situation--what is going on inside him regard to the ended relationship, how to develop his life to the fullest. Counseling helps the divorcing husband and wife to gain insight and achieve a mutual understanding between themselves in order that they may see their marital differences, misunderstanding and conflicts, and, gives them enough courage and strength so they can make their decision and deal adequately with the problems affecting their marriage.

Divorce Counseling is to guide the couple making a decision to divorce. As a part of this the counselor needs to point out the emotional cost of divorce, particularly as the husband and or wife verbalize these feelings.⁸

Once verbalized, emotional responses to a situation can be analysed

⁸ Charles Stewart, The Minister as Marriage Counselor (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 121.

and, brought into proper perspective. Thus, the major and minor problems can be isolated and dealt with appropriately.

PRE-DIVORCE COUNSELING

Pre-divorce Counseling, like that at any other point in marriage, centers on the needs, expectations and future goals of the married couple. It usually begins at the time when both marital partners seek help. However, Samoan pre-divorce counseling must be begun at the initiative of the counselor, minister, or friends, rather than waiting for the couple to come and ask for help. In Los Angeles, the Samoan perspective of people who have pain is that they cannot seek help, but rather struggle with their own pain, not sharing with anyone else. Therefore, pre-divorce counseling must begin at the time when it can be seen that the couple needs help. The minister, counselor and friends may take the initiative rather than wait for a request for help. A minister has to take the initiative in talking with the couple by talking with them informally the first time. Let them know that he is ready to help, that he really cares and has concern for what happens in their marriage. Perhaps, in the second session the minister's help centers on the feelings that the couple are experiencing in that moment. The minister can help them make a mature decision regarding their future. He can confront the couple with the positive past experiences, ups and downs, the establishment of home and family. However, once the decision has been made by the couple, no matter what the decision is, the minister should support and encourage their decision in all positive ways

that may ease tensions between them.

If the couple decides on divorce, the main task of the minister, priest, counselor, friends and family, is to help by supporting each of these people through the transitional period of the divorce. The decision to divorce should be a mature, well thought out one, which involves many aspects. A divorce means the complete reorganization of a life, the readjustment to the new situation of being alone, it means considering child custody, and a new relationship toward the ex-partner. Some of the good aspects of divorce are: freedom to make a new life based on the individual's desire for change, freedom to choose a new life partner, perhaps better suited to his needs and desires, is now his.

If, however, the couple decides to rebuild the marriage, they should each consider what the goals will be: to renew communication in the marriage, to create new understanding between husband and wife, to take new approaches to the problems existing in the marriage. The minister counselor, friends and family should be available to assist the couple in making a mature decision regarding realistic expectations and goals for either of the marriage partners. Under no circumstances should the impossible be set as a goal, for instance, the immediate loss of two hundred pounds. Nor, if changes are called for, should one person be made to struggle with that change by himself. Quite often behavioral problems are a matter of cause and effect, and one partner may contribute to the problem of the other. Such behavior should be brought out so that the problem can be dealt with by both parties.

The Marital counseling focus is directly on the couple and is to help them to make a mature decision. At this period, both husband and wife are confused emotionally and have feelings of guilt. They may have different kinds of questions, e.g. should they keep the marriage or divorce, should they leave one another, could they forgive and forget, if they keep the marriage what do they consider the strengths and weaknesses, where does there seem to be good possibilities for improvement? This is a period of complicated questions, ideas, and decision. Whoever the counselor, he should never hand the couple a "ready-made" answer, but instead, allow the couple to arrive at their own solution based on a mature consideration and decision.

The situation in the first period of divorce counseling is more filled with depression, anger, self-pity, crisis and overwhelming feelings of anxiety, hate and shame, than those feelings which may follow. Each may arrive at opposing solutions to their marriage problems, one wants to reconcile and the other wants to divorce immediately. Or, they may both agree to keep their marriage and work with the differences and problems through counseling. The divorce counselor helps the husband and wife establish whatever final decision they feel is necessary. The counselor is always open to any possibility during this period of stress; he comforts, encourages, guides, challenges and supports the decision the couple makes no matter his feeling in the matter.

The Counselor is a resource person for a couple. He acts as a consultant and refers the couple to any agency which he feels could

offer help and guidance toward the practical problems involved in this relationship. Pre-divorce Counseling focuses in the present situation of the couple as Fisher indicated:

Predivorce counseling begins when divorce is no longer a feeling, a thought, fantasy, or threat by either husband or wife. Instead, the thought, fantasy, or threat is crystallized by one of the spouses into behavior significant of divorce; . . . ⁹

These different kinds of emotions bring the following suggestion from Carol Mindey. To her mind, church is the best place to go for help for some people:

If you are religious and a churchgoer, you may be more comfortable seeking help through your church. Many priests, rabbis and ministers are specially trained to do some family counseling. Your religious advisor may be able to help or may direct you to someone else. There may be real comfort in prayer and increased church attendance in the time of stress and confusion; meditation is good not only for the soul, but also for the mind. ¹⁰

In the counseling process for the couple who is in the process of considering divorce or the rebuilding of their marriage, I plan one session with each individually, and two joint sessions with husband and wife. I also request their personal history and the history of their marriage relationship. This might help me to understand each of them. In the final session I invite their parents and children to help in the reorganization of what will happen in the marriage, and to help make this . . .

⁹ Fisher, p. 30.

¹⁰ Mindey, p. 34.

as near as possible, a chance for personal growth for all the participants.

Intimacy grows as personality needs are met in a marriage. In healthy marriage, "positive complementarity" is strongly evident. This term refers to the couple's mutual enhancement of identity through meeting each other's need. It can be done only in a relationship of love. By love, we mean sensitivity and responsiveness to each other's needs and wants. Nurturing each other by mutually satisfying heart-hungers is the essence of a loving and growing marriage.¹¹

This is the type of relationship to be outlined and established as a goal, if the couple decides to rebuild their marriage. If on the other hand, they decide to divorce, the counselor must develop the insight to guide them in that decision so that each can feel his own responsibility in its establishment as a solution to their dilemma.

REBUILDING THE MARRIAGE

Agreeing to rebuild the marriage is the first step to renewal of the relationship between husband and wife. At this point, both husband and wife should be ready for change in attitudes toward their marriage toward new ways of thinking and experiencing marriage.

Rebuilding the marriage can also mean growth within marriage, and the couple needs growth counseling, as is indicating by Clinebell:

Growth Counseling involves a variety of growth stimulating methods to help people use more of their potentialities by (1) developing better communication with self, other, nature, and God--the four basic relationships within which all growth occurs;

¹¹ Howard Clinebell, Jr. et al., The Intimate Marriage (Harper & Row, 1970), p. 66

(2) developing new skills of relating in mutually-affirming, mutually-fulfilling ways; (3) growing by making constructive decisions and taking responsible action; (4) using the growth possibilities inherent in each life stage; (5) learning to use pain¹² and problems of unexpected crisis as growth opportunities

Husbands and wives cannot attempt all the possibilities for growth in their relationship if they are unaware of them. It is responsibility of the counselor to point out each possible growth opportunity as he learns more about the relationship between the couple. They must be encouraged to build a trust relationship that will effect the marriage. To accomplish this, they must begin to depend on one another in crisis, share things together such as pain, depression and joy. Husband and wife should then begin to grow in understanding and mutual dependence; create or renew communication between them (and their children) bear things together so that they will balance the load of family responsibilities. Their challenge is to establish a new relationship through love, understanding, forgiveness, and acceptance; to see their family as a loving resource of acceptance and strength. They try to forget the past and adjust their family life toward love and forgiveness. They should let their marriage grow spiritually. The counselor's role in this process is to support and encourage each decision for growth.

AFTER THE DECISION TO DIVORCE

At this point the husband and wife have decided to terminate

¹² Clinebell, Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment, p. 2

their marriage. This is the most painful decision ever made by some married couples. It involves a loss, new adjustment to a new life situation, and the complete reorganization of one's entire life. Both husband and wife have different emotions, such as hatred, anger, hurt, loss, depression, because one will loss the other and they have to start the whole life pattern again. These emotions will come out again and again, increasing in intensity until they peak and then subside. This process may take weeks, months, or years.

Who has the most difficult time adjusting to divorce, men or women? Norman Wright quotes Dr. Mel Krantzler:

Krantzler suggests that the recovery rates for men are different from those for women. Women appear to have a greater part of their total identity destroyed during a divorce and often hit rock bottom during the first months of separation.¹³

Indeed, most often a wife must think about what kind of life she wants, where she (and the children) will live. Husband and wife must both realize that divorce is final, the termination of the marriage, and freedom for them both. The wife has some decisions to make:

Decide what you want from a divorce. There's a lot more in it than just freedom from your husband. What are your positive goals for your own life? What do you want to be doing a year from now? Fantasize for a moment. Do you want more education, a better job, a different life style? How can you accomplish these goals? ¹⁴

¹³ Norman Wright, An Answer to Divorce (Irvine, Ca: Harvest House, 1977), p. 25.

¹⁴ Carolyn K. Washburne, Women in Transition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), p. 189.

A counselor should be prepared to help all during this period, help in dealing with depression, anger, loss. He should help them to release their emotional turmoil and look forward to their future with new hope for success. He should support, encourage and advise them on ways to benefit from their experience and plan for a brighter future and better life ahead.

Growing persons are moving toward increasing acceptance of an openness to themselves and others; growing awareness of and respect for reality; increasing self support and self-esteem; relationships of creative interdependency; growing capacity to give and receive love; increasing intellectual competence and creativity; greater freshness of perception and richness of feelings (both joy and pain); caring value system ... a widening openness to newness and change.¹⁵

This is, perhaps, not only a goal for those experiencing divorce, but for all people.

COPING WITH EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS DURING DIVORCE

The emotional problems during divorce are often extremely complicated. Some divorced men and women think only of the release of getting out of their unhappy marriage as the best way to help their problems; the significant point to make with them is that it is how they cope with their problems during the divorce that makes the difference between potential success and failure in the future.

¹⁵ Howard J. Clinebell, Jr. Growth Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p. 20

1. Attempt to laugh at yourself, look in a mirror and see what kind of person you are--Do you show a picture of yourself to the world which seems terrible, with a long face, no smile, because you are dominated by your emotional feelings. Try to smile and forget the past. Enjoy yourself "now." Try to participate in some funny, fun events now. Not yesterday or tomorrow, but now. Your children may help you--play together, make fun together. The intention of this exercise is to make yourself happy. For life is rather empty if there is no laughter, joy, and happiness.

2. Each should try to find a job in order to secure financial support for yourself and your children. You ought to try to become an independent person. How can you manage your home and children if you still totally depend on others.

3. Try to win new friends, in church, your place of work, club, and these people will give you a new picture of life toward which you can work.

4. Consider improving your education, because it will increase your chance for good employment and improve your self-image.

5. Try to involve yourself in some organization, professional club, professional field--teaching, social worker, nurse, doctor, lawyer. Investigate whatever opportunities you may discover for change for the better. As long as you are involved in the world around you, you can cope with your emotional problems during divorce, and after.

NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE POST DIVORCE PERIOD

One of the primary needs of the post-divorced man or woman is the desire to be released from their emotional turmoil. There is also the need to understand himself or herself clearly, and gain insight so as to be better prepared for the life adjustments of the future. Divorced people often expect some better life in the future; they also often expect a good relationship with a future partner who is trustworthy, understanding and forgiving. Most men expect a nice house, an understanding and compromising husband, healthy happy children, and a family growing together in understanding, sharing.

A counselor should extend guidance, supportiveness for both husband and wife in the post divorce period. It is not usually wise for the recently divorced to rush into a new marriage, but instead, relax for a while and prepare for a new life's adjustments. Some people believe that the sooner a divorced person remarries, the sooner pain, anger, and other emotional problems will be released; but, those people should be advised that these traumatic feelings may not disappear unless the divorced person is willing to release them.

The mourning of the dead marriage easily comes in the divorced person when he is not prepared in advance for handling his emotional reaction to the divorce situation by counseling. Therefore, postdivorce counseling should focus on the subject's personal growth potentials, the new life adjustments, greater understanding of self, greater ins-

ight into his new status as a single. The divorced wife must consider how she will care for the children, find a new lifestyle, get back into the social life as a single parent, find a job, prepare to handle new problems as they arise.

By seeking appropriate help, you can capitalize on what has happened to you and precipitate the process of your personal growth. Your life situation makes it imperative for you to review and determine where you are going, what your long-range goals are concerning yourself.¹⁶

Indeed, the main purpose to be served during the post divorce period is to concentrate on the personal growth of the person, giving him the autonomy to exercise his own rights in making decisions about his future. A person in the post divorce stage may need some personal guidance in establishing goals for changing old negative attitude and negative, self-defeating behavior.

There are practical suggestions and aids the counselor can offer, such as help in finding a job, a lawyer, a place to live, how to make positive social contacts, through church, school, volunteer work. In addition, divorced people need people who understand them and their situation rather than judge them concerning their divorce:

Many people who have gone through a divorce can recommend some very competent assistance to those entering the experience. There

¹⁶ Fisher, p. 119

are many Divorce Recovery and Rehabilitation Seminars that are offered by College, Universities, and Counseling Agencies ... New friends are made and new growth takes place.¹⁷

Thus, the divorcing or divorced person realize his is not a totally unique situation and that there is hope for personal renewal and growth. It can not be stressed strongly enough, the assistance for the divorced person should come from different level of society and help him in practical ways as well as give emotional support.

¹⁷ Smoke, p. 163.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need in Samoan Community today, especially for people who are in crisis psychologically and emotionally. I recognize the inner needs of the Samoan couples who are in the process of divorce and those who are already divorced. There is no service provided for them in terms of Samoan speaking counselors, ministers, or any other functionaries. There are some services available, but in English; and it is often very difficult for Samoans to express themselves in English, especially during an emotional crisis. On the other hand, Samoans will not seek for help when they are in the severe crisis of emotional pain and despair. They wait for someone to come and initiate the counseling for them.

Therefore, only minister, counselors, and lay help who have some knowledge about Samoan culture could provide their service in a very effective way for the Samoan people. I believe that the need for divorce counseling is a problem in Samoa, New Zealand, Hawaii, and in parts of the mainland United States, especially in Los Angeles. People try to satisfy the external needs of Samoans through welfare, housing, retirement funds provided, jobs and education; but their inner needs have not been met with understanding and help. I strongly encourage professional counselors, ministers and others who affiliate with the Samoans to consider their psychological needs. I hope that the modern Samoan generations will consider counseling as a new tool for the reorganization,

reorientation of the Samoan lifestyle. People in pain can be lost, confused, feel guilt, hatred, and anger; but counseling can help these people work through these emotional upheavals. Samoan people need someone who is concerned, caring, and helping in the time of crisis of marital upset or divorce.

The absence of premarriage counseling for Samoan couples is perhaps one of the cause for the increase in divorce among Samoan couples. Some Samoan couples I interviewed stated that the premarriage counseling they received before their marriage helped them overcome some initial problems, and aided their progress in growing together and achieving insight and awareness in their relationship with each other.

I therefore recommend the following steps to aid Samoan couples and individuals; people who are planning marriage, people who are considering separation and divorce, people in the process of divorce, and people who are already divorced.

1. I strongly recommend and encourage ministers, especially Samoan ministers, to introduce pre-marital counseling, and to use this approach with all couples. Try three or four sessions. Clinebell very clearly describes premarriage growth counseling with couples. See: Howard J.Clinebell,Jr., Growth Counseling for Marriage Enrichment (Phildelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

2. All Samoan ministers must have some knowledge about counseling in various crisis in order to cope with people of their congregations

who are in emotional upheaval over a variety of problems, especially couples in the process of divorce, or the person who is already divorced.

3. Ministers, must take the initiative in reaching out to their Samoan affiliates. Samoans find it difficult to seek help, and moreover, Samoans do appreciate the concern, help and care from others when they are in any circumstance which warrants aid.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

CASE STUDIES

1. A DECISION TO RECONCILE

History: Simi, 32 yrs., he was adopted by Ono and Nika while his parents were Methodist Minister in American Samoa. His adopted parents brought him to Western Samoa and he lived there until he left for the United States. He was educated in Western Samoa from primary school through secondary school (technical school). He worked in Apia for some years before he brought his wife and small daughter to the United States in 1973. He is a heavy drinker and is fond of women. He was active in the church for two years and then dropped out.

Sina, 28 yrs., brought up in a good family. Her father was a business man and her mother took care of the children. She was educated in Samoa from primary school to the secondary school. She taught at the Mormon School in Samoa.

Situation: Sina describes Simi as fond of women. He brought many girls in their house while they were in Samoa. He does the same thing here (in Los Angeles). He lived with Vai in her apartment in Carson, California, for many times. When Simi came to visit his two daughters, they just ignored him. "He told me that he does not love me anymore, but he comes because he loves the children very much. That is why he visits the house. Simi came to see us once in two weeks, and then only stayed a few minutes with me and my daughters." When her third baby was born Simi came home and told Sina that he would stay with them and try to re-

build their marriage. This interview was initiated by me, by telephone, on 14 November 1978. I talked with Simi in Lywood (12 June 1979) I was also the initiator of this interview. I asked how the relationship with Sina was at that time. He replied, "It is difficult when I recall my past experience with Vai (his lover). I'll never forget her; now she lives with my parents in Samoa. We went back to Samoa together with the intention of living there for good. Now she is pregnant. You know, I love Vai very much, and I don't love Sina. Vai is an understandable woman; she respects me and my parents. Sina is a lousy wife; she does not care about me or my parents; she is a snobbish wife."

Problem: Probably Sina did not care for Simi in the first place; however, when Simi started living with Vai, then Sina did everything possible to draw Simi back to her. Simi was thoroughly tired of Sina and her attitude towards him. She always insulted him in front of his parents, friends and other people. Simi sought to find some way to repay her for her actions toward him. Sina was frustrated and angry. Simi lived with Vai illegally, and found that he did not love Sina anymore. Sina was left with definite emotional problems when Simi went back to Samoa with Vai, leaving his wife and three children. Simi deliberated divorce or separation, but hesitated because he loves his children. Sina has no desire for divorce; she needs reconciliation.

My Role: As this is a couple who has separated many times, it is hard, at times to work with them because of the long history of bitter emotions. I began to understand them when I learned of Simi's background as an adopted child, and Sina's background as a member of a large, "good" family. I tried to listen and continue the conversation for both

Simi and Sina. I tried to release some of the emotional backlog of anger, hatred and loss in Sina. I also supported her decision to keep the marriage. I helped Simi to see his role in the father and as a comforter in both religious and economical needs. I guided them toward a mature decision to work for reconciliation. They both hurt--Simi hurt because of Vai, left behind in Samoa, but if he decides for divorce, his children will be hurt; and Sina will be hurt again. I try to help them restructure the family life, create trust between them, open new ways of communication, understanding, forgiveness and acceptance between them.

Result: They decided to rebuild their marriage, both for their own benefit and for the benefit of the children. Though it was a painful situation for Simi, it was a good experience for Sina. In informal conversations they tell me that will try again, and perhaps, will succeed. They both agree to reconcile.

Change: For the first time since Simi's return from Samoa, they begin to live together as husband and wife, sharing the same bed. They begin to attend church together as a family. I hope this change prepares them for a good marriage in the future.

The Counseling Period: 16 July 1978 to 15 June 1979.

2.

A DECISION TO DIVORCE

History: Va, 38 yrs., born in American Samoa, educated in Samoa and at Oregon University, where he earned a B.A. He came from a good family. He went back to Samoa to teach High School in 1974. He married Oa when he was 32 years old. He came back to America for further studies; and he lived with Tia, a former student, in her apartment for six months.

Oa is a school teacher, quiet, with a motherly look, pleasant and intelligent. She speaks slowly and is unable to communicate her feelings. At the age of 26 she married Va, while both were teaching High School. She considers Va's education better than hers. She came from a big family, was educated in Western Samoa, American Samoa and UCLA, where she majored for three years in Education. She did not get her degree because she married Va, and had to take care of the children. Six months after Va had returned to the United States, Oa came to the United States with her two sons. She discovered her husband living with Tia.

Situation: Va and Oa had decided to divorce after five months of physical separation. They had been married for six years. Va said he had been dissatisfied with his marriage for about five years. He stated that he had had many affairs during this five year period, and had almost broken up his marriage two years previous to the present separation in order to marry another woman. When Va separated from Oa, he lived with Tia, his former student.

Oa admitted that she was careless in her relationship with Va in their married life, but contended that they had a better than average

marriage. She accused Va of dishonesty in their marriage. She told me that Va was always interested in other women since she married him. He often lived with other women for a few days, weeks, a month. She took care of the children at home. Oa also accused Tia because Tia took Oa's husband and lived with him. Oa strongly believed that Va was an immature person, that he needed some guidance and help. Both of them agreed to terminate the marriage.

Problem: Va is interested in other women. He is unfaithful to his wife. Va and Oa have not been able to express their feelings openly to one another. Their interests, values and morals are different. Oa accused Va of always ignoring her, and she regards Va as an immature person. He was unwilling to talk things over with her; he insisted that he was head of the family, and made all major decisions. Va said Oa talked about the same old things everyday, and the time and frequency of marital relations should be determined by the husband.

My Role: I was trying to understand the problem; not to judge, but to listen with compassion, be supportive and to guide where I could. I understand that people involved in divorce are generally in an emotional crisis. My role is to educate, guide and help in their making of a mature decision for their future and for their personal growth. I was open to whatever decision they made and was ready to help beyond that decision.

Result: Oa sees that her attitude on maturity and giving has contributed also, to the problems of their marriage. She decides to re-evaluate her attitudes in the future. She agrees that divorce is the proper decision. She thinks she will feel better about herself and her hus-

band once the divorce goes through.

Change: Oa stated her goal: "When trouble comes, I'll not be easily disturbed. Where have I been at fault? In lack of knowledge about the role of the wife. I am willing to change--given the change, I'll be a perfect wife in the future. I'll try to have good communication with a future husband. I'll use the resources provided by the church, which are forgiveness, and acceptance. These changes give me hope and encouragement for a better marriage in the future.

The Counseling Period: 8 December 1978 to 9 October 1979.

3.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

History: I'u is 51 years old, short and handsome. He went to religious school. All his life he wanted to become a minister. He was an ordained minister in Samoa before he came to the United States. He taught in religious schools in Samoa; he was responsible for the church young people for many years. He was an intelligent young man compared to other Samoans. He divorced his wife while in American Samoa in 1973, just before he came to the United States.

Nua is 40 years old, well built and beautiful. She came to the United States and married I'u. They have two children.

Situation: I'u blamed his former wife for their divorce. She conceived a baby while I'u was away in New Zealand. She tried to convince I'u that the baby was his, but he knew it was not so. They took the matter before the church, but the church had no right to divorce Samoan couples and referred them to the Court where they obtained a legal divorce.

I'u and Nua had known each other in Samoa. They had lived in the same area and had seen each other occasionally. I'u had divorced his previous wife and had come to the United States alone. He had been here a year when Nua came to the United States and they married. I'u told me that people in Samoa had gossiped so much about his divorce, that perhaps he had divorced so that he might marry another girl. He had come to the United States to escape the gossip.

Problem: It was suggested by many people that I'u had divorced his former wife because he wanted to marry Nua while they were in Samoa.

I'u did not mention that to me. If that was the case, then his most terrible emotional problem may be guilt. It became necessary to leave the past behind, no matter what the cause for the divorce might have been.

My Role: I did attempt many things in order to help I'u with his psychological, emotional, and mental needs. He really needed someone to understand him and his feelings. He was frustrated, shy; he feels guilty, thinks that everybody is against him. He has hatred, feels lost, accuses himself of irresponsibility. Many times I tried to help him get his feelings out into the open, and make suggestions for ways that would help him release those feelings in a constructive way.

Meanwhile, I supported his marriage to Nua, and I gave him suggestions on how to adjust to a new lifestyle, different from his former marriage's experiences. I helped him reorient and reorganize his family. And I gave him personal support and encouragement for himself and for his marriage, so that he and his marriage might prosper in the future.

Result: I'u and Nua became a happily married couple, and with their two children, a happy family. The release of tension in the home helped all the members of the family. I'u explained that he had had trouble relating to people because people thought he was such a bad man. He did feel that his present marriage was much happier than his previous one.

Change: I'u seems a happier man and his wife has begun to understand him, and the way that Samoan people influence one another and live

together. I'u has even been readmitted to the ministry. He is now a minister of a Samoan congregation.

The Counseling Period: 17 January 1979 to 4 February 1980.

4.

A DIVORCED MOTHER

History: Lua, 24 yrs., born in American Samoa, educated in Samoa from pre-school to junior high. She completed her high school here in the United States. She came from a large family, five sisters and three brothers. She was married when she was nineteen. She has two children and works in different places at different times. She is inactive in the church.

Situation: Lua was married to Joe when she was young. She married him and enforced his participation in events in the intimate and extended family which involved contributions of money. Joe was not interested in that particular lifestyle and left home. Perhaps this was because he was not used to the Samoan culture. They separated for six months, and while they were separated, Joe lived with another woman; she got pregnant. Lua was very disappointed and angry. In fact, Joe came back with the intention of seeking a reconciliation, but Lua rejected the idea. She insisted that since Joe had committed adultery, divorce was the only solution. Their final decision was to terminate the marriage, divorce.

Problem: I thought Joe felt and understood the immaturity of Lua in their relationship as husband and wife. Lua always insulted and embar-

passed Joe before his friends and members of their families. She wanted to control everything in the family, including her husband. He made his own decision to separate for a few months. Lua was very upset and angry when she learned that Joe was living with another woman, especially when the other woman became pregnant. Joe and Lua made the final decision to terminate the marriage. The problem now was, would Lua like to remain single or remarry? She is confronted with hard decisions. If she remarries, what kind of man does she want as a husband? What about her children? In what ways would she want a future marriage to be different from her first marriage?

Result: She has changed some of her feelings toward her husband. She is working hard to earn money to support herself and her children. She is very independent now. She feels that the divorce was a good way to prepare herself for a better future life and future marriage.

Period of Counseling: 6 September 1976 to 23 March 1979.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE ON DIVORCE COUNSELING

WITH SAMOAN COUPLES

The following questionnaire is designed to learn about how Samoans experience and think about divorce. It is better to have each person fill out a questionnaire alone and then compare results for agreement and disagreement. Each statement asks for a response ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

- | | <u>Strongly</u>
<u>Agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Un</u>
<u>Certain</u> | <u>Dis-</u>
<u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly</u>
<u>Disagree</u> |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. A Christian Doctrine concerning divorce should be based solely on biblical teachings. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Many of the assumptions about divorce in both Old Testament and New Testament have been proven inaccurate and development of Christian Ethic concerning divorce must include a critique of those assumptions. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Church should encourage couples to deal with physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of divorce. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Seeking divorce counseling should be encouraged by ministers. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
5. Women who divorce should not be respected by friends and other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Men who divorce should not be respected by friends and other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Personally, I would have difficulty considering divorce for myself or someone close to me except under extreme circumstances.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. As a matter of general understanding, I approve the woman's right to choose to divorce her husband.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. As a matter of general understanding, I approve the man's right to choose to divorce his wife.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. The fundamental cause of divorce is searching for a new life.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. I find it difficult to imagine circumstances in which I would condone a divorce.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
12. Young couples should have knowledge of divorce.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Adultery is a sickness that leads to divorce	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. I would support legislation that encourages couples to remain in their marriage and attempt to renew their marriage.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. I personally feel uncomfortable when discussing issues regarding divorce.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Women are psychologically and emotionally better able to divorce men, than men to divorce women.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Men are psychologically and emotionally better able to divorce women, than women to divorce men.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. It is ultimately man's responsibility to provide economically for his family.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un</u> <u>Certain</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
19. Unfaithfulness in marriage requires divorce.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Faithfulness in marriage may include allowing both partners to have sexual relationships outside marriage.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. When sexual relationship within a marriage are mutually satisfying there is no need for divorce	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Divorce merely ends the husband and wife roles, but not the parent's role, for parents remain parents.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Divorce is merely another one of life's experience.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. In some people the feeling of loss of marriage partner by divorce, when the decision to divorce was not a mutually acceptable one, may be so great that there emerges a strong need to hang on to one's rage and hostility. It is as if the person needs this hostility to go on from day to day.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- | | <u>Strongly</u>
<u>Agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Un</u>
<u>Certain</u> | <u>Dis-</u>
<u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly</u>
<u>Disagree</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 25. Children may feel the deep anger that the parents have toward each other will destroy them. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 26. Some children may fear the loss of both parents as a result of divorce. It is therefore very important for the child to hear "I will take care of you," or "I will always be with you." "I love you and always will." | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 27. One of the causes of divorce is a couple's inability to resolve problems in a reasonable way. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

PART TWO

The following questions are particularly designed for the husband or wife who is in the process of divorce; to help them to rebuild the marriage or decide to divorce.

1. What is wrong with your marriage? Try to point out what you think is the basic point at issue.
2. What is the matter with him or with her?
3. Where are the problems?
4. Do you have a conflict in ideas about what marriage should be?
5. Was there a basic personality conflict between your father and mother?
6. Was there a serious religious difference?
7. How successful were the marriages of your close friends, your sister, brother, or other close relatives?
8. What attitude does your family, or close relatives, take toward your marital difficulties?
9. Is part of the difficulty conflicting personalities?

10. Does your spouse exhibit interest in other members of the opposite sex?
11. Is he or she interested in religion?
12. Did he or she suggest or initiate reconciliation?
13. Is he or she usually conservative in opinion?
14. Is he or she easily hurt in terms of feelings?
15. Does he or she enjoy home life, including sharing the joys and pains?
16. Is he or she a good listener?
17. How close or far apart are you in your philosophies of life, your interests, your appreciation of things, your hobbies, your opinions and your tastes?
18. In what ways are you willing to change?
19. Where have you been at fault?
20. What are you willing to do to change these faults?
21. What do you consider the strengths of this marriage to be?

22. What do you believe the real difficulties to be?
23. Where do there seem to be good possibilities for improvement?
24. What compromises are possible?
25. What does the husband need to do?
26. What does the wife need to do?
27. Did you seek marriage counseling? Both partners?
28. With whom?
29. For how many sessions?

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